The Saturday Review of Literature

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"I demand a lifetime of 300 years for political maturity, and condemn all existing attempts at government as mischievous child's play....I do not admit any limit to human life except the statistically certain fatal accident, which must occur to everyone sooner or later."

—G.B.S. on the Eve of His 90th Birthday (See page 7)

Shaw As Social Critic

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

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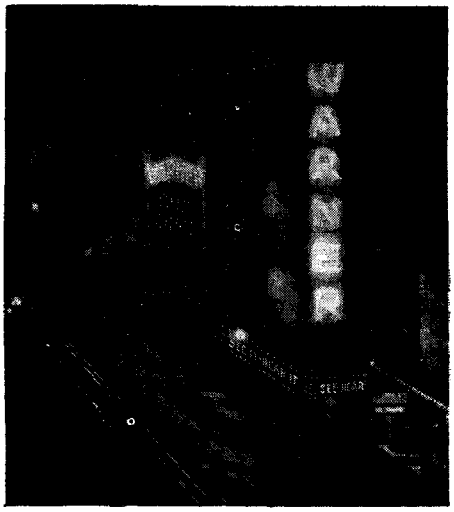

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A Gertrude Stein catechism

By RICHARD WRIGHT

Q. Has Gertrude Stein written a new book?

A. Yes. She has written a new novel, *Brewsie and Willie.*

Q. If I bought a copy, could I understand it?

A. Absolutely It's simple. Just open it and read on . . .

Q. What's it about?

A. Specifically, it's about our GI's in Paris, what they said and did there But, generally, it's about you and me, about America. our problems and hopes.

Q. Wait a minute. That's a contradiction. How can Miss Stein write about the specific and general at the same time? How can *Brewsie and Willie* be about GI's in Paris and about us here in the USA?

A. To explain that means telling something about how Miss Stein wrote the book. You see, Miss Stein's patience for listening and talking appears to be without limit, and when our GI's were quartered in Paris she listened to their daily speech with ears that recorded their sayings accurately. Then, using that colloquial speech as a painter uses color, she has done an amazing, direct, and revealing conversational portrait of our contemporary American consciousness.

Q. What are some of the things she says?

A. Modernistically she has splashed some of these glaring pigments upon her canvas! *American men are mostly virgins. . . . Perhaps we are not isolationists but are simply isolated. . . . If the army is an example of how government runs things, then government had better keep its hands off. . The last generation was a lost one, but this generation is simply a sad one. . . . The answer to the class struggle is that there is just no answer. Industrialism makes a country poor As a nation we are living through the most dangerous moment in our history. . . . Gallup Polls are possible only in a country where people do not think. . . . America is already an old-fashioned country.* . . .

Q. Did she say that? I don't agree. . . .

A. Don't argue with me. Read the book and argue with Miss Stein.

Q. But why should I read a book like that?

A. You could no more afford to miss Miss Stein's *Brewsie and Willie* than your doctor could afford not to put his stethoscope to your heart when you call him in. Reading *Brewsie and Willie* is a way of feeling and counting your own pulse, and the pulse of the nation.

Q. Do you mean that Miss Stein says we are sick?

A. Leave me alone. Read the book.

BREWSIE AND WILLIE
by Gertrude Stein

$2.00 at all bookstores

A RANDOM HOUSE BOOK

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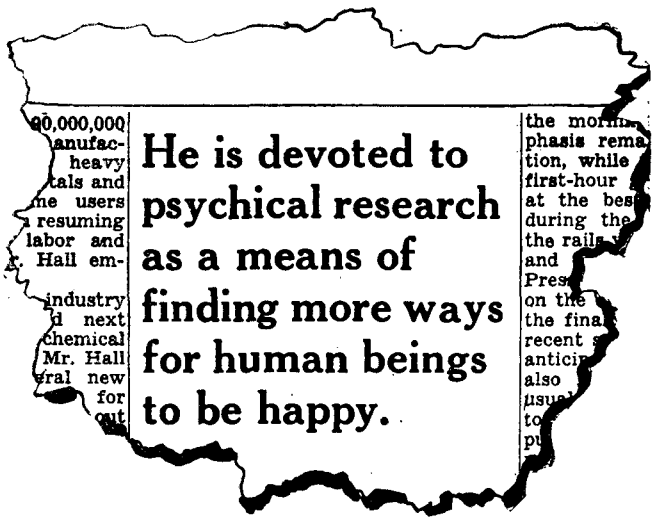


THE MYSTERIOUS stranger who told Simon & Schuster they were going to publish STARLING OF THE WHITE HOUSE has been calling us, too. But it wasn't the first time, and so we weren't too surprised. He wanted to order 25 copies of THERE IS A RIVER, written by Thomas Sugrue. You have read about THERE IS A RIVER before in these pages: it is the story of Edgar Cayce who, when he died in January 1945, left behind him the most remarkable record of clairvoyance in history—30,000 manuscripts, or "readings", each the record of a lecture dictated from self-imposed hypnotic sleep.

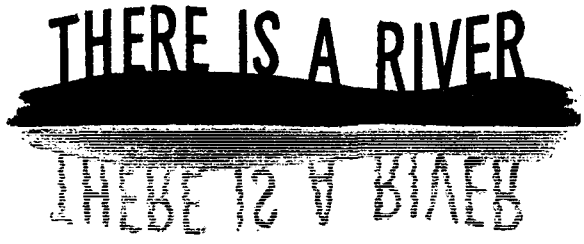
Clairvoyance has intrigued and stretched the mind of man for hundreds of years. In 1784 the Marquis de Puysegur, attempting to hypnotize a peasant boy named Victor, sent the lad into a deep state of sleep. Suddenly the boy began to diagnose the physical condition of a woman who was sitting nearby. This is the first recorded case of a phenomenon which became known to the 19th century as somnambulism. Every once in a while a person, when hypnotized, fell into a very deep sleep and became clairvoyant—able to see with the mind's eye, apparently, into the physical pattern of any person named. Only the location of the subject had to be given. There was tremendous excitement about the discovery. If the clairvoyance was true, the diagnosis was infallible and infallibility of diagnosis was all medicine needed to become well-nigh infallible itself. For a while, as Carl DuPrel records in his PHILOSOPHY OF MYSTICISM, fashionable folk went to somnambulists rather than physicians. There were many of them in Germany, in France, in Austria, and in England. In 1831 the French Medical Society named a committee to investigate the phenomena. When the report was read, an Academician protested against printing it "because if the facts reported were true, half of our physiological science would be destroyed."

But already in America the seed had fallen. In Poughkeepsie in 1841 Andrew Jackson Davis, a shoemaker's assistant, when hypnotized fell into a deep sleep and became clairvoyant. For many years he travelled with a Doctor Lyon, diagnosing and suggesting treatments. Then on March 18, 1877, on a farm in Christian County, Kentucky, Edgar Cayce was born. When he was twenty-one he suffered the loss of his voice. After every other method failed, hypnotism was tried as a means of helping him. He fell into a deep sleep and became clairvoyant, diagnosing his own ailment and suggesting treatment. For many years he tried to ignore his curious talent; he was a student of the Bible, a Sunday school teacher. He wanted nothing to do with strange powers. But he could not resist the pleas of people made desperate by ailments judged incurable. When all else failed, he tried his clairvoyant powers. They seemed infallible, though he could not believe this was so. Then his wife became ill and the doctors themselves told him to try his luck, since they could do no more. He tried, and his wife recovered. His son burned his eyes with flashlight powder. Again the doctors told him to try his luck. He did and the boy recovered his sight. After that he gave up his photographic business and devoted the rest of his life to giving readings for the thousands who wrote to him or came to him from all parts of the world. There was, for a time, a Cayce Hospital at Virginia Beach. In 1931 the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc., was chartered under the laws of the State of Virginia to study the phenomenon exhibited by Edgar Cayce.

Now the Association is faced with its greatest task. It must catalog, index, examine, study, and evaluate the information contained in the 30,000 readings and the evidence accompanying them in letters and medical reports.

What was the phenomenon of Edgar Cayce? What is clairvoyance? In 1940 Thomas Sugrue, who had known Cayce for fourteen years and studied thousands of his readings, set out to examine the question. He did so in THERE IS A RIVER, a full length biography of this extraordinary man. The revised edition, recently published, carries the story of Cayce and his wife up through the time of their deaths.

THERE IS A RIVER is a book unique in every respect, and it sells as steadily as any story about Lincoln, the doctor, or the dog. It is simple and humble, warm and inspirational. It is the sort of book which people give to friends who are in trouble or who are ill or who are despondent. And like most people with the impulse to pass on a "good book" to the person they know will like it, we wish somehow that Henry Holt could have read THERE IS A RIVER. Because, above all, it is a story which has helped human beings to be happy.



THE STORY OF EDGAR CAYCE

AT ALL BOOKSTORES
HENRY HOLT & COMPANY

by THOMAS SUGRUE
Revised Edition, $3.00

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Shaw As Social Critic

J. B. PRIESTLEY

THERE is one good reason why it is very difficult for me to write a critical estimate of Shaw as a social critic or as anything else. I belong to the wrong generation. If I were older, much older, I could see him as a contemporary. If I were younger I could stand farther away from him. But Shaw, like Wells, dominated the world in which I grew up. They were there, doing their best work, when I arrived. My father was a socialist schoolmaster with a passion for reading, and my boyhood was spent in Bradford, which was one of the early strongholds of the Labor movement. If my parents had regarded Shaw as a dangerous revolutionary or a self-advertising clown, then I might have discovered him for myself. But naturally he was among their heroes; and his plays and prefaces and pamphlets were there for me to feed upon; with the result that for at least thirty-five years I have taken his wit and wisdom for granted, like so much starshine and sunlight.

The consequence of this is that while my admiration and gratitude, warmly colored by my affection for a glorious character, have remained as a solid foundation, I have probably spent more time in my own mind disagreeing with him than I have agreeing with him. Because I am a Socialist, too, and was converted by him long ago, then I look for points of difference. Because his plays were among the earliest I saw, I do not want to write the same kind of plays but insist upon doing something quite different, and even deplore his influence upon many of my colleagues in the theatre. (This is because the Shaw method without the Shaw mind does not make for good drama.) Probably I agree with seven-eighths of his magnificent social criticism, but it is upon the remaining eighth that I tend to concentrate all my attention. His influence upon people of my sort has been so immense, so all pervading, that in order to prove—if only to ourselves—that we too exist as social critics or creative artists, we have had to break away deliberately from this Merlin of our time. He can have anything he likes from us as a birthday present. But a critical estimate? Why, we hardly know how to begin.

The Victorian Age was filled with giants and junk. The last Victorian giant was a red-bearded Irishman, who put a match to the junk and then sauntered away, chuckling, fully aware of the Mephistophelian effect of the leaping flames. Some explosive and combustible materials were to hand, of course; many supplied by Marx, and others by Samuel Butler and Ibsen; but it was Shaw himself who tossed them into the dust-heap and then struck the match. He had hammered out for himself a superb debating style, which was equally suitable for dramatic speech of polemical essays, and never too far from the stage or the platform; a style with a challenging and provocative tone in it, good enough for anything except dubieties and fine shades, in which its author had no interest. He had developed, too, a manner of his own, the importance of which seems to me to have been overlooked. It is a manner that apparently carries provocation almost to the point of insult and yet in fact is never really offensive. The blows rain down on us, but we never bleed. Somewhere behind the abrupt attack is a smiling magnanimity, just as behind the hammering and smashing style there is a voice that is enchanting in private talk and irresistible on the platform. And again, like all great masters of theatrical comedy, Shaw realized early that however hard the argument may be driven and the points pushed home, comedy demands an atmosphere of golden good nature, of mild and pleasant sunlight, an artificial world in which nobody is going to be badly hurt. Indeed, it might be charged against Shaw that there are times, particularly during the more recent and more tragic years, when he mistakes this artificial world of comedy for the real world, in which men bleed and scream and welcome death as a deliverance. Thus, a manner perfectly adapted to the conditions of Edwardian debate may not be quite suitable for a later age of sudden arrests and concentration camps. But this is merely to say that he is not faultless. The diamond may have a flaw, but it is a diamond.

—*Vienna Götz*

"Mr. Shaw has a weakness for Russian eggs with Italian salad."

THROUGHOUT his social criticism Shaw has from first to last made the very best possible use of two ideas, using them like a pair of bulldozers to clear a road through a jungle. The first idea is still not sufficiently understood and appreciated. The second one is now part of our inheritance, and thousands of useful persons, from medical officers of health to young literary critics, make use of this idea themselves without even knowing that it was Shaw who originally showed us the way. And both ideas are alike in this, that they are at once socialist or communist and fundamentally religious. And they are evidence that Shaw possesses the outlook and temperament of the man of religion. He is in fact a prophet, and though he may have been addressing the London County Council or the Fabian Society, rehearsing a play at the Court Theatre or the Malvern Festival, debating with Belloc and Chesterton or scribbling witty postcards in Hertfordshire, he has always been a pro-

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phetic figure on the old plan, bearded and passionate and single-minded in the desert, living a spare life on locusts and wild honey and awaiting a new revelation from the God that he prefers to call the Life Force. And if this is overlooked, then he cannot be properly understood.

The first idea, which is common to both Early Christians and Late Communists, is that theory and practice must correspond. We must not keep belief and action in two separate compartments. Beliefs that do not directly inspire definite action are merely so much humbug. A man who professes to think one way and then acts in quite a different way is either a fool or a rogue. It is dishonest to condemn slaughter houses and then call for steaks or chops. It is hypocritical to lead what you imagine to be a cultured spiritual life if you are doing it on money wrung out of exploitation and swindling. Our great-grandfathers wept over the deaths of Little Nell and Paul Dombey but objected to equally small children being taken out of the mines and factories. Victorian novelists pretended to blush and tremble at the very notion of prostitution, and then went cheerfully out on the spree with women of the town. Men were pious church wardens on Sunday evening and commercial pirates and cut-throats on Monday morning. Delicate fine ladies, who turned pale at the sight of a limping poodle, allowed their fellow-women to work themselves blind and idiotic for them. The manufacturers who often turned the Midlands and Lancashire into a black stinking hell eagerly acquired Pre-Raphaelite pictures of Arthurian knights and dim swooning princesses. There was one code for the drawing room and another code for the foundry and the mill. Men prayed for peace while initiating moves that would inevitably lead to war. They hung colored silks over the iron machinery of society. And what was not cant and humbug was so much ignorance.

ALL true religion has sharply demanded a correspondence and consistency of theory and practice, thought and action, just as all pseudo-religion has always tried to escape from them, taking refuge in "ideals." These are convenient because they are not in this world and can be kept nicely floating in mid-air, where they make no real demands on anybody and allow men to feel that they are at heart noble creatures while actually behaving very badly. Thus, the Russian intellectuals of the nineteenth century never stopped talking about their ideals, but it was not until there came an end to this pleasant chatter and the Bolsheviks took over that Russian society was genuinely transformed. It is this idealism, which belongs to pseudo-religion, that Ibsen attacks; and Shaw, who has always had the single vision of the genuine religious type, followed him. He asked the Late Victorians, who were his first audience, to stop talking about their ideals, to break down the division between theory and practice, to take a long, hard look at their society and then not to sigh over it but to change it. His single vision enabled him to see the connection between the things that had often escaped the misty double vision of his contemporaries. While much must be allowed

for his wit and style, the fact remains that some of his best effects were obtained simply by telling the plain truth. Thus, you have only to read any genuine military history to realize that making war successfully is not a slapdash romantic affair but a grim organizing job on a large scale, in which a cool head will be worth much more than a hot heart; and out of this plain truth he made his glorious comedy of "Arms and the Man." Being a dramatic critic in the nineties, when a conventional unreality and bogus romanticism still nourished the theatre, Shaw had a grand opportunity to discover how much nonsense and humbug people were still ready to accept, in theory but not as guides to action; and into this rickety hot-house he let a roaring east wind. Nevertheless he was not, as often imagined, himself entirely unromantic. His impulse was often more truly romantic than anything known to the people he shocked. He was not playing Sancho to their Don Quixote, but was far nearer than they could ever be to the don himself.

The difference is that he knew a great deal more than Don Quixote. In fact he knew that what other people imagined were giants were actually windmills. Where they saw huge threatening figures, he saw sails and wheels going round. He had learned from Marx to observe the structure of society. He added economics to literary genius, just as Wells added biology to literary genius; and in each instance it was this immense bonus that gave each man so much force and originality. This brings us to his second idea, the one that may be said now to be part of our inheritance. It is the conception of the community as a living whole. (This again is a truly religious idea, and may be found among all the prophets.) Most of Shaw's thinking is done in terms not of persons or groups but of the community as a whole. He is, so to speak, standing farther back, taking a wider view, observing the movement of the whole contemporary mass of men and women. It may be objected that too often his generalizations are too large and sweeping, that he over-simplifies too much, that he presses great names into his argument often in the most unscrupulous fashion, that he performs platform tricks where they are unwelcome. But the breadth of his outlook, together with his frequent flashes of insight, would make us forgive faults far worse than any of his, if only because in reading him or hearing his dialogue we seem to be breathing exhilarating mountain air and to be looking down upon the world from a great height. We are with the wittiest and most magnanimous of the major prophets. But the outlook, the vision, the tone, are still those of a genuine prophet: Man is seen against the stars, and is being judged.

IT was this that gave force to Chesterton's shrewdest thrust at Shaw. Chesterton said: "He has always had a secret ideal that has withered all the things of this world. He has all the time been silently comparing humanity with something that was not human, with a monster from Mars, with the Wise Men of the Stoics, with the Economic Man of the Fabians, with Julius Caesar, with Siegfried, with the Superman." But the same argument could be used against every founder of a religion, against every genuine prophet, all of whom declared emphatically that humanity as they found it was not good enough, that God demanded something better. And Shaw's acceptance of Lamarckian evolution, his belief that the outward development of living creatures corresponded to an inward growth, that new needs acquire new powers

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to satisfy them, made this endless comparison, this withering of things as they are for the sake of things as they might be, essential to his outlook. It is true that often he affects a deliberate coldness, a chilling austerity, but this to my mind is merely an overplaying of a character part, assumed as a protest against an early Dublin-operatic environment and then against Victorian cosiness and muddle-headedness. I think too that, reacting against the complacent nonsense talked by the politicians about democracy, he has always tended to overrate the wisdom of the oustanding individual and to underestimate the collective common sense of ordinary people. He has never lived under a severely authoritarian regime, and if he had he would have been one of the first to challenge and denounce it, at any cost; and perhaps owing to some failure of imagination, or an unconscious trick of identifying himself with the Caesars and dictators, he seems almost ready to admire such regimes for their own sake, just as he has always understood the weaknesses of democracy better than he has appreciated its virtues, many of which—including the benefits of reasonably free speech—he takes for granted.

Already some of his early plays have lost their challenge as social criticism, or at least as topical social criticism, and are now enjoyed as pieces of excellent stagecraft in the all-too-rare comedy of intellectual high spirits. I wish he could see these delighted audiences (who arrive at the playhouse tired and worried and hungry, not like the well-fed easy-going folk for whom he wrote originally) and could hear their shouts of laughter, for that would be the best birthday present of all. These playgoers of our grim time who enjoy his wit, his stagecraft, his philosophy, may still be unfamiliar with nine-tenths of what he has meant them to understand; but nevertheless I think that most of them have already absorbed or have even been conditioned by a good deal of his social criticism. They bring it with them to the playhouse, like another and much vaster program. Much of what now seems to them common sense was once considered merely a part of Shaw's "paradoxical clowning." (And the critics who denounced him for it now seem quaint period figures.) Some of the air we breathe now has G.B.S. in it, a little mountain oxygen that has somehow penetrated the fog. And where this mountain air comes from there is nothing small, nothing mean, nothing vindictive and cruel; it knows the sun of wit and wisdom and great cleansing winds of doctrine.

En Route to "Maturity"

G. B. S. Talks with His Favorite Interviewer

HAYDEN CHURCH

"DEATH is not to be regarded as natural and inevitable. We die because we do not know how to live, and kill ourselves by lethal habits. Mortality should be confined to murder, suicide, and fatal accidents."

George Bernard Shaw was talking to me at his home at Ayot St. Lawrence, tiny Hertfordshire village. On the eve of his ninetieth birthday, he believes life can and should be extended to at least 300 years, "the necessary span of a worthwhile human life" essential for "political maturity." Life at present, he says, is too short to be taken seriously.

"Remember," Shaw said to me, "that our conduct is influenced not by our experience, but by our expectations.

"Give a man only seventy years to live, and he sings, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' Give him 300 and he becomes a new man. All his valuations change—and valuations govern conduct.

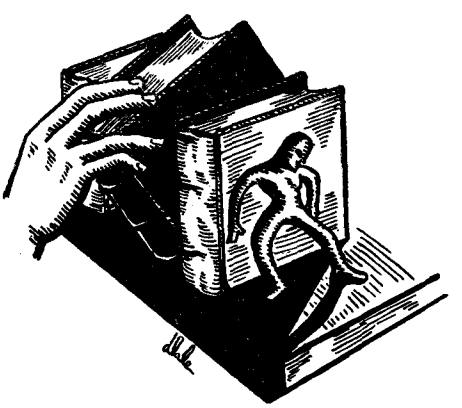
"In my cycle of five plays 'Back to Methuselah,' I demand a lifetime of 300 years for political maturity, and condemn all existing attempts at government as mischievous child's play. I have described myself as being barely old enough to be the office boy of an under-secretary of state.

"I am still boyishly interested in boxing, photography, books and pictures of imaginary life, and pseudo-scientific fairy tales."

"How did you arrive at the figure of 300?" I asked.

His answer:

"I have lived 89 years and am not yet fully adult politically. Give me a second century of apprenticeship as a ruler, and at the end of it I might be qualified as a senator, and an oracle for a third century.



"But I do not admit any limit to human life except the statistically certain fatal accident, which must occur to everyone sooner or later.

"Weismann was the first to suggest that death is not natural and is the product of circumstances and environment. But he did not follow it up: it was only a passing hint. I *did* take it up in the 'Methuselah' cycle. I started as a biologist in 1906 by a lecture on Darwin, which was the basis of my preface to 'Methuselah' nearly twenty years later.

"Science was then neo-Darwinian, and still obsessed and blinded by the reaction against Fundamentalism. But it has slowly come round to my way—until in the essays of Joseph Needham (like me, the son of a musical mother) and in Alexis Carrel's 'Man the Unknown' and Maurice Ernest's 'The Longer Life,' my view has become orthodox and reached even the Rockefeller Foundation.

"When 'Methuselah' was new, its reviewers persisted in describing my immortals as surviving by a conscious exertion of the will to live. But in 'Methuselah' the advocates of longer life all die; and the survivors find it just happening to them, to their own puzzlement and surprise, in spite of their incredulity."

"But didn't you once tell me," I objected, "that you yourself dreaded becoming a centenarian, and that 'immortals' might get unbearably tired of their old selves? Did you refer to yourself in the latter instance?"

Shaw: "No I have not got unbearably tired of *my* old selves. I have simply left them behind. I am still able to acquire a new self every year, like a new suit of clothes. But the body inside the clothes is wearing out; and personal immortality cannot be faced in such circumstances."

"So," I interjected, "you, who may be described as ninety years young, admit that the body inside the clothes is wearing out. What, then, is the point of others, weaklings compared with you, living on, as Shakespeare put it, 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything'?"

G. B. S.: "There has never been any question of the horror of a race of Strudbrugs. Swift made an end of that." (The Strudbrugs were the people in "Gulliver's Travels" who were cursed with immortality. Deathless, but with their faculties gone, having lost even their memory, they

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For G. B. S.

LONG years ago, when a certain youth was sixteen he carried in his pocket a volume called "Quintessence of Ibsenism." He kept marking favorite passages in this book with red ink until finally almost the entire book was underlined in red. With this volume in his pocket he went forth to smite the Philistines hip and thigh.

Ever since, this boy, who was I, has had the deepest admiration and respect for one of the world's great men, who is you.

EUGENE O'NEILL

were the most miserable of their kind.)

"What is contemplated as a political lifetime," Shaw continued, "is a century of infancy and adolescence, a second of political maturity, and a third of voteless oracular wisdom. That is enough for learners, administrators, and senators.

"Men are now much younger and more vigorous in mind and body at seventy than they were within my knowledge at sixty. Women are younger at fifty than they were at thirty within the same period. Clearly Dr. Maurice Ernest's Centenarian Club has some hard actuarial facts to go on."

Is Shaw's surprising virility, physical and mental alike, attributable in part or wholly to the fact that he is a vegetarian, and has been practically throughout his life? This seems possible, and I was fortunate in drawing from him the first detailed description of his dietary that he ever has given for publication.

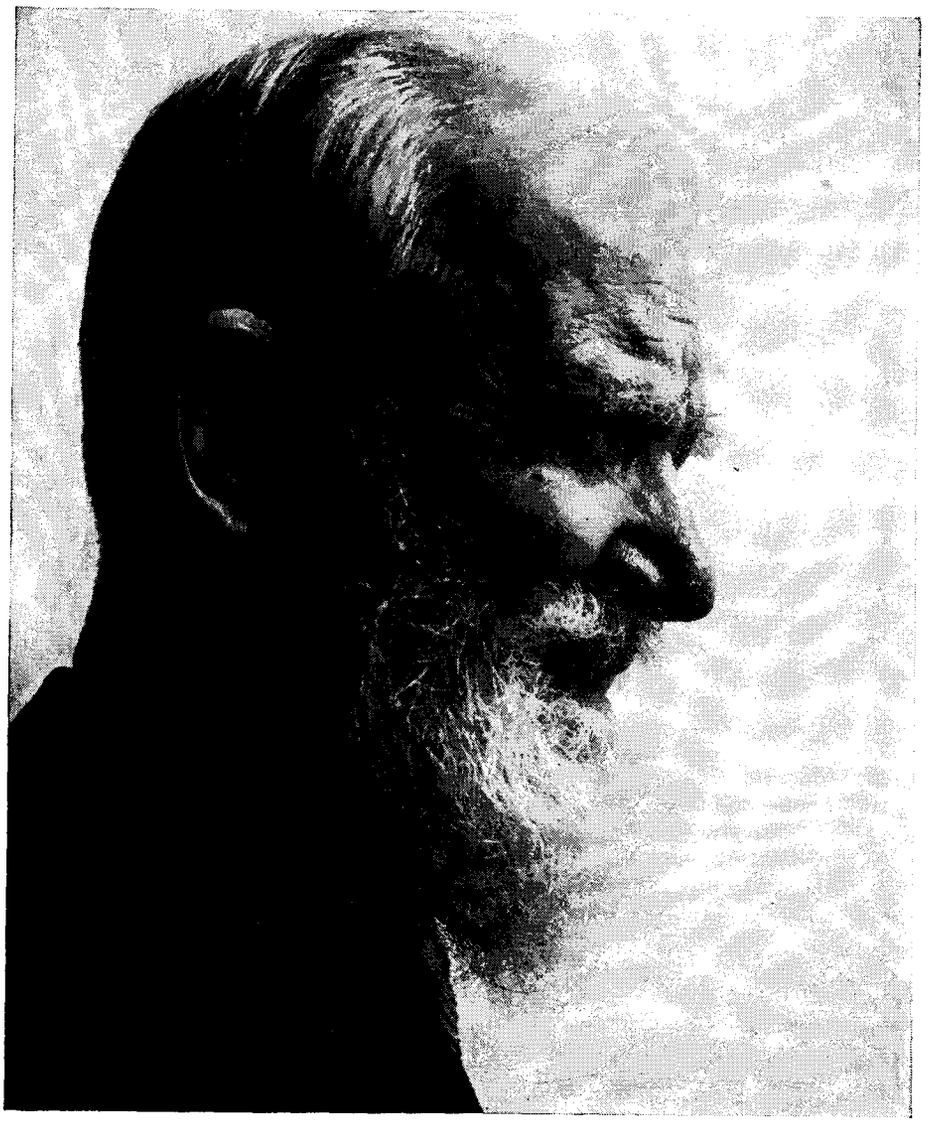
It is generally known that he has not for years past eaten meat, but he does not, it appears, live exclusively on lentils and "greens" as is popularly supposed.

"I don't eat more vegetables than you do," he declared. "To the modern propaganda of salads and fruit I can only say that they do not agree with me—though I can digest anything—and produce in me the symptoms they are supposed to cure.

"But do not suppose that the world's edible stock consists solely of corpses and greenstuff.

"I only mislead people when I tell them what I eat or don't eat. My diet and habits might not suit them; and I don't eat the same things every day, except, perhaps, at breakfast, at which I eat either oatmeal porridge liberally dosed with butter, or some drier cereal, with, when times are normal and I can get them, half a grapefruit and a cup of Instant Postum to keep up

(Continued on page 10)



The crowning years.

At twenty-three.

Pocket Album

☆

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW will go down in history as one of the most photogenic figures in English literature, as the accompanying exhibits attest. As is well known, he is himself an amateur photographer of no mean attainments, though he is probably not so proficient as was Lewis Carroll, who was also the earliest camera fan among English authors. The photographs on these two pages appear in "G. B. S. 90" (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), published July 26 by Dodd, Mead & Co., through whose courtesy they are here reproduced.

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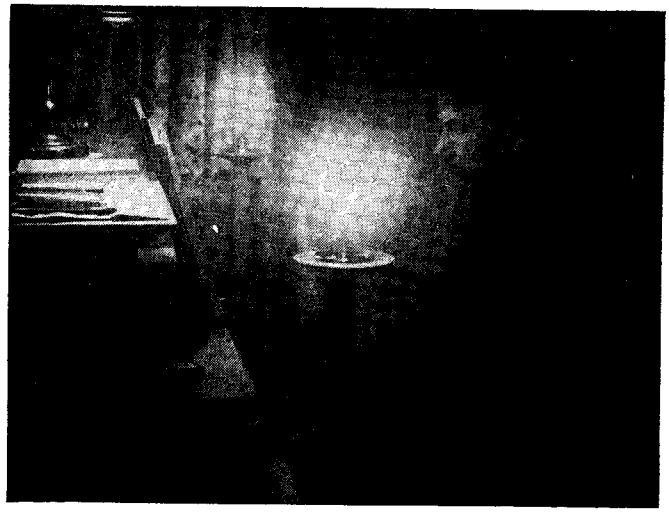
Explaining the camera to Mrs. Shaw.

Near Dingle Bay, Ireland.

Ayot St. Lawrence, 1938.



Maybury Knoll, 1915.

With Labor party chief Keir Hardie during the general election of 1910.

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(*Continued from page 8*)

the tradition of a cup of warm, brown fluid with milk and sugar in it.

"I eat three meals a day, and am convinced that I should be better with two. I eat cheese, butter and eggs, but no flesh, no fowl, and no fish.

"Everything I eat has been proved by some writer or other to be a deadly poison. Everything I don't eat has been proved to be indispensable to life.

"I object to carnivorous diet not only because I feel instinctively that it is abominable, but because it involves a prodigious slavery of men to animals.

"Cows and sheep with their *valet-aille* of accoucheurs, shepherds, graziers, slaughtermen, butchers, milkmaids and so forth absorb a mass of human labor that should be devoted to the breeding and care of human beings.

"Some day, I hope, we shall live on air and get rid of all the sanitary preoccupations which are so unpleasantly aggravated by meat eating."

"You have mentioned your renowned eighty-page preface to 'Back to Methuselah,' I remarked to G. B. S., "and no doubt the new comedy on which you are known to be engaged will have an extensive one. Why do you consider your plays need prefaces?"

"My plays do not *need* prefaces," Shaw replied, "but the people who buy my books need variety and quantity enough to last them at least a week in these hard times.

"Those who like political essays and don't like plays can skip the plays. Those who like plays and don't like political essays can skip the prefaces. In this way everybody is completely happy.

"The combination of preface-pamphlet and play is classic tradition in English literature, but nobody ever has given such good measure as I.

"The only trouble is that silly people who are ignorant of that tradition, and who read neither my books nor anybody else's, imagine that the prefaces explain the plays and that the plays are incomplete without them. Of course, they are entirely independent works."

"Why do you consider it was," I asked, "that your great gift of characterization, your wit, and other qualities did not make your early novels, 'Cashel Byron's Profession' and the

rest as successful as your plays have been? Are the two mediums so different, or are they simply not equally congenial to you?"

"How do you know that my novels are less successful?" Shaw replied, severely. "My plays remain unacted for years at a stretch; but people go on buying my novels and perhaps even reading them.

"As to why I do not go on writing them, do you suppose that anyone who could write a play would condescend to such an easy job as writing a novel?

"Anyone can write novels, and the worst of it is that nearly everybody does.

"Perhaps when I am ninety-five I shall become lazy and go back to the old Victorian game. It will be an amusement for my second childhood."

"Supposing," was my last question, "you were to prescribe a final philosophy for this age, what would it be?"

"I do not prescribe anything final," Shaw replied. "I am not God Almighty, disguised as G. B. S. I can, if you put me to it, suggest a humdrum political program for the next few years.

"For instance, I am advising the women to demand the Coupled Vote —one couple one vote—so that every administrative authority shall contain as many women as men, whether either of them likes it or not.

"And I advise the nations to put before every other reform the invention of an alphabet of at least 42 letters, capable of indicating every sound in our speech without using more than one letter for each sound.

"The yearly cost of having to write my name with four letters instead of two is astronomical. The saving would repay the cost of the atomic bomb in a few months."

BOTH Mr. Priestley's essay and Mr. Masefield's poem are printed by special arrangement with Dodd, Mead & Co., publishers of "G.B.S. 90," a collection of birthday tributes to Shaw. A copy of this book was given to each guest at *The Saturday Review* banquet in honor of G.B.S. held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York on July 25, the eve of his ninetieth birthday.

On the Ninetieth Birthday Of Bernard Shaw

By John Masefield

AFTER these ninety years, he can survey
Changes enough, so many due to him:
Old wax-work melted down, old tinsel dim,
Old sentimental clock-work put away.

There the old playthings with their lovers lie;
But he remains, the bright mind ever young,
The glorious great heart, the witty tongue,
Erasing Shaw, who made the folly die.

Is there a cranny in our old conceit
Unlightened by the brightness of his mind?
Is there a blinker, making many blind,
Unrent by him, to show that light is sweet?

Is there a mystery in life or fate
To which his spirit has not sought a door?
Is there a play, in all his pungent store,
Not touching home? unlinked with something great?

Honor him living, all Earth's brightest brains.
Let Ministers of Fine Arts, centuries hence,
Order him statues—let us have more sense,
And call a splendor great while he remains.

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Tribute to Genius

G. B. S. 90. *Aspects of Bernard Shaw's Life and Works. Edited by S. Winsten. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.* 1946. 280 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

ON the surface, this remarkable anthology in praise of George Bernard Shaw, written by twenty-four distinguished Englishmen, an American, and a Chinese, bears the trademark of a communal enterprise, a somewhat labored epithalamium, as if the contributors thought, "Our elder companion and laborer in the vineyard is now wedded to eternity by his ninetieth birthday. Let us forget how greatly he has annoyed us through the years and celebrate his approaching divorce from the common miseries of humanity's marriage bed." All of these writers express their debt to Shaw, including Professor Gilbert Murray, who wrote the brilliant foreword to the collection while lying ill in bed, "with a typewriter as old as myself and out of repair"; and a very old typewriter it must have been—the very first typewriter, in fact—since Professor Murray is exactly Shaw's age. All of them owe some of their education to the great castigator; they have been illumined by his wit and wisdom, pierced by his rapier, wounded by his arrogance, or offended when he played the clown at their expense.

It is likely that a collection like this has not been published before, a book written to a man of genius by his contemporaries, so filled with honest admiration and adulation. There are one or two sour notes, however, or cabbages among the wreaths of flowers. Max Beerbohm contented himself with a brief letter to the editor of the collection, S. Winsten, in which he says, "My admiration for his genius has during fifty years and more been marred for me by dissent from almost any view he holds about anything . . . I was always distracted by two emotions about him, (1) a wish that he had never been born, (2) a hope that he would never die."

But in the essays on most of the aspects of Shaw's life and work from his boyhood to his scenario writing, he emerges shining, like an aged crusading knight of the Holy Grail. If he is still capable of it, these encomiums should bring a blush to his hollow cheeks. They are, on the whole, amazingly well written, witty, urbane, and filled with a kind of transmuted ardor that seems to have been borrowed from the fire that their subject has kindled in sixty years of writing, pamphleteering, and speaking. It is certainly one of the most fascinating books of the day; and if the reader wants to find out what has gone into the making of this remarkable man, there can be no better volume for him to own, for forty of Shaw's books are today out of print so that you cannot turn to his work and rediscover the complete man.

It is almost impossible to conceive of a book by American writers and scholars on Shaw that would turn out to be a tenth as competent a job, or one half as good by American writers celebrating, let us say, the ninetieth birthday of Sinclair Lewis or Henry Mencken. But after all, England has maintained the tradition of the "man of letters," the writer who is content to live simply while he grows in wisdom and honor, who does not need to sell his talent down the river by paying occasional visits to Hollywood to support his country house, his town establishment, and his swimming pool. There are some great names in this list of men who are here paying their tribute to Mr. Shaw: Murray, Masefield, Webb, Housman, Priestley, Wells, Beerbohm, Joad, Dunsany, Inge, Huxley, and others less known who have analyzed his work as a scientist, economist, philosopher, educator, and finally as an expert on phonetics. All of the contributions become in a way a part of literary history, for Shaw's life will be investigated by writers for the next half century, and most of these men have known him intimately; everything that he has said that can be recalled, every letter and memorandum he has written, and everything that has been written about him will be worth its weight in literary gold.

Too many geniuses of British literature have died, dramatically and foolishly, at too early an age, as if to be a great poet, dramatist or novelist demanded a tragic and early demise. There was Marlowe, killed in a tavern brawl; Byron, dying at Missolonghi during the Greek revolution; there was Shelley, drowned off the coast of Italy because he risked his life in a small boat in a storm; there was Keats, burned out with tuberculosis at twenty-five. George Bernard Shaw has never taken chances with his life; he has had too great a respect for his talents to risk them by drowning, falling off a mountain-side, or poisoning himself with food cut out of the corpses of animals, or liquids that would serve admirably as paint-removers; he has always cared for and nursed his body as the tenement of his spirit. He now believes the lesson he taught in the plays and prefaces that make up "Back to Methuselah," that we can and must live longer if humanity is to be saved. Let us hope that he is spared for many years to prove that there is more than a grain of truth in his philosophy.

"You mean you actually write these books? Aren't you a little old for this sort of thing?"

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A Nation in One Family

INDEPENDENT PEOPLE. By Halldór Laxness. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946 480 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROGER BUTTERFIELD

THIS is a hard but truly great novel, which goes far to explain an entire nation. The Icelanders are indeed an "independent people," as Secretary Byrnes and the State Department have been finding out. "A free man can live on fish," says Bjartur, the peasant-hero of this book. "Independence is better than meat."

So Bjartur and his family live on fish—reeking salt refuse fish from a barrel—while all around them the highlands teem with tasty wild birds and the lakes are agleam with fresh fish. But Bjartur the sheep-raiser has no time to supply his family with meat—they must all hurry through the short weeks of summer cutting grass for the sheep. In the mornings they stagger to the fields half-starved and retching. They work all day in marshy pools, bearing the soggy bundles of grass on their backs, falling asleep after the noonday meal of salt fish in puddles of water. To the sheep and their needs Bjartur sacrifices two wives and all of his children, who grow sick, die, or run away from their miserable lot. Yet when the parish minister argues that sheep have been the curse of the Icelandic nation for a thousand years, Bjartur angrily stops his ears from such heresy.

And when a sudden curse strikes his sheep—when he finds them with their throats cut and necks broken in their stalls—it does not occur to Bjartur that his deranged son is taking bloody revenge for a lost youth. Bjartur blames the deaths on Kolumkilli, the fiend who lives under a cairn of stones on his land. Still he is too stubborn, too "independent," to pay her the tribute of an extra stone added to her pile.

Yet with all its harshness and irony, "Independent People" is a tender and poetic book. The story of Bjartur's star-crossed daughter Asta, who grew up "like a lovely plant . . . in a wilderness of stone," is told with charm and genuine sympathy. So also with Finna, the peasant's wife, who finally found love and God in a cow, and little Jon, who escaped by becoming a musician and going to America, "which is farther than death." Even Bjartur himself is no mean figure as he strides through a storm, shaking his fist at the heavens and shouting defiance in self-composed verse. Once, caught in a blizzard, he seizes a giant reindeer by the horns and is carried across a river in a scene as weird and misty as any in the ancient sagas.

There is humor in the scenes where the ancient shepherds come together to recite and criticize each other's poetry, to consume coffee and raisin seeds, and to discuss the woes of sheep—cysts, tapeworms, foxes, and diarrhea. And there is mixed humor and pathos when the aged grandmother gives Jon her most valued possession as a going-away present—a golden ear-pick which she uses once a year, at Christmas time.

The book is drenched in the cold beauty of the northern landscape, with its shimmering lakes and lingering summer twilights, its howling winter storms and "calm-weather snows," and the interminable cruel rains of autumn. Through it all runs the strange pattern of Icelandic folklore, part-Celtic and part-Nordic, and twice as old as the history of America. In Iceland, even today, practically all men are poets and experts on the supernatural. The Britannica devotes more space to Icelandic literature—which is mostly poetry and folklore—than to the history of Iceland itself.

Finally, "Independent People" is richly symbolic of the entire life-span of the Icelandic nation. Although covering only one generation, the book actually describes peasant life as it existed in Iceland for many dark centuries, and brings it all the way down to the cooperative movement, the financial debacles, and the communist uprisings that swept the country after the First World War. Very few Iceland farmers in recent times—as the Icelandic critics have pointed out—have lived in such agonizing poverty and dirt as Bjartur and his family. Iceland boosters like to point out that their people eat better, take more baths, buy more books, and have more indoor toilets than any other nation in the world—in proportion to population, which is only 120,000.

Halldór Laxness, the author, is comparatively young—forty-four—but Icelanders already rank him with the other great Scandinavian novelists of this century: Undset and Hamsun of Norway, Nexo and Jensen of Denmark, Siwertz of Sweden, Sillenpaa of Finland. Laxness has traveled and written in many countries, and his books have been better known—until now—in England and Russia than in the United States. In the late 1920's he spent a couple of years in California. "I arrived there," he wrote recently, "as a rather conservative European, but getting acquainted with America I turned Socialist, finding it the only thinkable reaction of an intelligent being to the state of affairs in that country." Laxness, like most Icelanders, does not believe that his country will ever agree to a permanent military base there for America or any other outside country. "We don't want to sell out our country to anyone, not even to our friends," he says.

Halldór Laxness: "Getting acquainted with American I turned Socialist, the only thinkable reaction to the state of affairs [there]."

Since 1931 Laxness has lived mostly in Iceland, where he receives an honorary salary from the government, but writes and engages in politics as he pleases. His wife is an X-ray technician in the Reykjavik Hospital. He is a very industrious author. During the six years of the recent war he wrote seven books of his own, translated Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms" from the English, Voltaire's "Candide" from the French, and five other novels from the Danish, and edited for publication several of the longer Icelandic sagas.

Club Window

By Dorothy Alyea

OLD sabre tooth, bound to a chair,
The child with his flower is gone from you, and the young man with the song.
You are contemptuous, you have cronies, you hold two pair.
The buzzards are invisible and the evening is long.

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Words in Their Meaning

BREWSIE AND WILLIE. By Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House. 1946. 114 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

MISS GERTRUDE STEIN is a plain-spoken, continuously interesting American woman from Oakland, California, now, and for some years, living in France. Having given her a name, a nationality, and an address, making her in these things like anybody else, I would like to add irritably that she is also a good writer of plain words which have been called incomprehensible by too many of her fellow-Americans, the ones who have considered her not so much sensible and interesting, which she is, as pretentious and dull, which they are.

She has also been charged with taking words out of their meaning and converting them to her own use, which is incompetent criticism, inasmuch as Miss Stein has always effected her writing by using the English language exactly and respectfully, refusing to dilute the simple primary colors of the words. Her prose has the honest taste of bread, requiring for its appreciation appetite if not hunger, but presenting I imagine an unaccustomed and baffling flavor to a great many readers. These readers are the ones of whom the writers of *l'ecole de patisserie* have said, "Let them eat cake," and they have—look around you.

Since this was and is intended to be a review of Gertrude Stein's new book and not a piece of truculence I shall say that it is called "Brewsie and Willie" and is a kind of recording, with the mutations through which art transcends simple reporting, of the conversations of G.I.'s as they talked in Miss Stein's apartment in Paris and when she visited them in troop centers. These conversations clearly indicate and articulate the anxiety and confusion which haunted and still haunt the American soldier static in Europe after the cessation of open hostilities.

Miss Stein, who is an expert listener, listened to a great many of these G.I. bull sessions and made out of that listening this good little colloquial book. And it is quickly clear that this is a book not to be read mainly, but to be listened to, to be heard. You might and Richard Wright did say that this is a conversational portrait of our contemporary American consciousness. Brewsie and Willie and Donald Paul and Brock and the two Red Cross girls all contribute their own particular pigments, and they all use the awkward, tumbling idiom, the defiant re-statement, the quick, parroted, easy answer which are the trademarks of common American speech, the speech perhaps better suited than any other to express bewilderment and wondering, the sound of the bull in session.

With Brewsie as a kind of Mr. Bones, the answer man, and Willie the lowest common denominator, the stubborn anti-intellectual, these two and the others range restlessly and widely in their discussions of America and Americans. Since you are never told what they look like, these G.I.'s, how tall or short they are or where they exactly are while they talk, it is as though they were disembodied and are just voices. And that is what they are, voices in the dark, and it is right that Miss Stein has kept them only that because the important thing is to hear them and not be distracted by seeing them. Things do not come out even, do not entirely add up for them, the air is not clear but they are always looking for the way to the blue sky and know they can no longer find it in a plane. Some of the things they tussle with and especially some of their angry conclusions are highly recommended for further consideration. Think about—they did—such things as:

> Perhaps we are not isolationists but isolated.
>
> Only in a country where the people do not think is a Gallup poll possible.
>
> The answer to the class struggle is that there is no answer. Industrialism, because it depletes the natural resources, makes a country poor.
>
> America is already, and has been for a long time now, an old-fashioned country.

And this about the American dollar:

> And, said Donald Paul, you were sitting there with your lonesome dollar. What do you mean, said Fred, I may be a poor soldier but I got more than one dollar. Not that, said Donald Paul, not that, what I mean is that the dollar the United States dollar, is a very lonesome dollar, it's all alone, it's riding wide and handsome but it's riding all alone, nobody can use it, perhaps pretty soon we can't use it, it's a mighty lonesome dollar.

Well, there it is, and for my money, my lonesome American dollar, there is a fine ear, Miss Stein's, and perfect pitch. And I think it would be a good thing for a lot of Americans to listen hard to this book and think about it, before Brewsie and Willie and all the rest of them get back and start talking all over the place. Theirs is the generation which is not so much lost, as Miss Stein once said in conversation about Ernest Hemingway's, but a sad one, and sad can become mad. Some of these warriors have been alerted to the trouble ahead, like Brewsie, and others less thoughtful, like Willie, still feel only a prickling of the skin, a suspicion that they and the war are being followed. Despite all the armor and care, despite the fact the guns have stopped shooting and the bombers are down from the sky, these thinking men are aware in varying degrees of a foreboding, of the threat of Peace, a word which has now been taken clear out of its meaning, and not by Gertrude Stein, either.

—From "Art in the Armed Forces."

Sore Feet. A sketch by Olin Dows, U. S. A.

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There Are No Neutrals

COMPANIONS OF THE LEFT HAND. By George Tabori. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1946. 338 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by MERLE MILLER

THIS second novel by the author of "Beneath the Stone" is a highly important book, written with passion and a point of view, and with a readable story of the Europe of day-before-yesterday and, perhaps, of today as well.

Stefan Farkas, Tabori's central character, is an aging, rich, and famous Hungarian playwright; like those of Sacha Guitry of France, a friend and contemporary, Farkas's plays have been smooth, slick, and meaningless, and when, at the beginning of the novel, Farkas comes to the dull and elderly Italian resort town of San Fernando, he wants only to rest. It is June 1943, but Farkas is not interested in the war. "It's like a football game," he says. "If they want the world, why kick? If they don't, why run after it?"

At the Hotel Paradiso, Farkas finds about what he expected: his old friend Ugo, the obsequious waiter; the usual English couple; a Viennese refugee girl with a scar who plays the violin, and three German officers before whom he pretends to speak only French. He doesn't like Nazis, but he doesn't want to fight them. He doesn't like revolutionaries either.

For a time, Farkas is left in peace, allowed to let his mind wander backward over a successful life, to remember his paralyzed brother, Daniel, whom he saw just before coming to San Fernando, and Anna, Daniel's wife, whom he once thought he loved.

But the peace and quiet of the tiny town on the Adriatic soon end, and, with the glad news of the Italian surrender, Farkas is in the midst of a revolution, set off when Father Giuseppe of the abbey on the hill locks up a handful of rebellious washerwomen who, like so many other people everywhere, want more pay and more leisure. The village revolt culminates with the hanging on a lamp post of Don Innocenzo, the pompous little Fascist who heads the local police.

Farkas wants no part of the trouble; he wants only to sit in a cafe, drinking red wine, wiping his monocle with his silk handkerchief, and waiting for Tony, the blonde refugee. But he is not, cannot be left alone. First, he is approached by the leader of the revolution, Giacobbe, the local Communist, who tells him, "These are rebellious days; the pulse of the world is beating faster and dull normality has gone. These are times when men everywhere must face questions no one has asked them before."

"George Tabori's novel is more than slightly reminiscent of Thomas Mann's long short story 'Death in Venice.'"

Eventually, and with great reluctance, the erudite Farkas, who wanted his only epitaph to be, "He tickled a weary world," finds himself swept along with the crowds who have come to cheer the victorious Allies. Everyone knows that the British are coming, that Montgomery will be there, accompanied by the chief rabbi of London and the entire British fleet. All the villagers know someone who knows someone else who has heard the news on the wireless.

Farkas is standing with the cheering crowds—San Fernando has a population of 800—waiting, laughing, when suddenly there is a plane overhead; then, without warning, bullets are ruffling the surface of the water. It is not the Allies who are coming; they are still hundreds of miles south of Rome; it is a German plane, and, in a few minutes Father Giuseppe arrives in a staff car with a German colonel who apologizes for the deaths of the villagers and explains that he has only come to restore order.

The colonel, like all the others, knows Farkas's plays and admires them. He has a simple favor to ask. Would Farkas tell the handful of rebels still holding out in the ancient bathhouse across the narrow water how foolish their resistance is? Farkas, still the neutral, would, and he tried. But the Communist Giacobbe was not ready to surrender, and in a powerful, moving climax Stefan Farkas discovers that he, much as he desires to remain outside the clash of history, cannot.

In form, George Tabori's novel is more than slightly reminiscent of Thomas Mann's long short story "Death in Venice," but with political and modern overtones that Mann did not include. Perhaps because he, too, is a Hungarian, Tabori writes, with fire and eloquence, a brilliant political tract, but it is not necessary to agree with his thesis to appreciate he has written a genuinely exciting novel.

Life on the Hudson River Docks

SHIPS IN THE RIVER. By Gösta Larsson. New York: Whittlesey House. 1946. 378 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

THE story in Mr. Larsson's novel is quite simple and unambitious, about a longshoreman and a girl, and how his love for her regenerates her. Now there is a summary that would seem to damn the book with its promise of staleness, but the fact is that "Ships in the River" is levels above its plot in charm and freshness.

This is entirely due to the sincerity of its writing. Mr. Larsson is a tale-teller who casts no side-glances toward effect. He seems to strive for nothing. He wants merely to tell about Jan and his life as a longshoreman on the Hudson River docks, his loneliness and his goodness of heart. Also about the strange Karen, beautiful and childlike, emotionally immature, about her unhappiness and her psychological illness and her life with Jan. He wants also to tell about the sounds of the river, the lights in the mist, the cruelty of the Shape-up, where longshoremen wait, or used to, for weeks in all sorts of weather on the chance of being picked for a job; and also the winding streets of the dock-side, the Village, the Battery, the tides, the headlands of the Hudson.

All of these things, and the people who move among them, are freshly imaged as though for a first time. In his earnestness about them Mr. Larsson achieves a certain lyric intensity, so that places and meetings and words glow with a vitality quite beyond the significance of this immediate history of Jan and Karen. The fact is that Mr. Larsson is a humanist, a conscious lover of people, and this fact will illumine whatever tale he feels impelled to write even though his writing remains otherwise undistinguished.

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Nehru on India

THE DISCOVERY OF INDIA. By Jawaharlal Nehru. New York: The John Day Co. 1946. 581 pp. $5.

Reviewed by KRISHNALAL SHRIDHARANI

THIS is a one-volume history of India, but it is personal history. The massive book tells the long and variegated story of one of the two oldest civilizations (the other one is that of China). But more than that, it tells the story of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as an heir to India's hoary heritage. The present and the past are very curiously intermingled in this eloquent narrative.

It could not have been otherwise. Nehru, primarily, is a man of action, and the dead past would not hold his interest for long. It was to avoid inactivity during his latest incarceration in 1944 that he took up the pen. The following, I believe, provides a key to his whole approach to history:

> Even my seemingly actionless life in prison is tacked on somehow, by some process of thought and feeling, to coming or imagined action, and so it gains for me a certain content without which it would be a vacuum in which existence would become intolerable. When actual action has been denied me, I have sought some such approach to the past and to history. Because my own personal experiences have often touched historic events and sometimes I have even had something to do with the influencing of such events in my own sphere, it has not been difficult for me to envisage history as a living process with which I could identify myself to some extent.

His distinguished autobiography, "Toward Freedom," was also born in jail. In it he told us what he owed to the special circumstances of his birth, to the Nehru clan and to his lawyer-politician father, to Mahatma Gandhi, who became his as well as the nation's mentor. His monumental "Glimpses of World History," in which he told us what he owed to the human race as a human being, was written in prison. Now, in "The Discovery of India," he goes back to his grassroots and tells us what he owes to India. Here he discusses aspects of India's traditions in a way which leaves no doubt as to what went into the making of Nehru and what was clearly rejected by his rebel spirit. His dissents, perhaps, form the most fascinating part of the book. It must be remembered that, like many of his outstanding compatriots, Jawaharlal Nehru discovered India while he was a student in England. "To some extent," writes Nehru, "I came to her via the West and looked at her as a friendly Westerner might have done."

It took him five months of prison solitude to pen these 581 closely printed pages, and one wonders, in passing, what will happen to his writting now that his jail-going days seem to have come to an end. India is now on the threshhold of independence and the erstwhile rebel is destined to be the most important government official of a free India, since Gandhi abhors any office and will prefer to remain behind the scenes as the father of the nation. It is time, therefore, to have a fresh view of India's man of destiny, and what could be more welcome than Nehru describing his own reflection in the mirror of India's history?

—*Acme*

"Jawaharlal Nehru discovered India while he was a student in England."

Nehru goes back five thousand years and begins with the Mohenjo-daro civilization, which flourished in the Indus Valley before the coming of the Aryans. Those Westerners who believe that India has perpetually remained intoxicated with God will be interested to note that this Indus Valley civilization, which was a contemporary of those of Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, was "a predominantly secular civilization." Thence Nehru goes on with the Vedic period, which heralds the advent of the Aryans. The Aryans were more vigorous but less refined and civilized than the original Dravidians. The subsequent Buddhist period is less elaborately treated than the following Mogul period. Then we come to invasions from the West which culminated in the British Empire, over which the sun is only now setting after two hundred years. I would especially like to commend to the attention of the Western reader Nehru's treatment of the so-called Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The other side

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

THE SAILOR'S LIFE

From the following descriptions of the crews of famous literary ships, can you name the stories in which they appeared and the authors who created them? Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 23.

1. *The Times* and *Saturday Review* beguiled the leisure of the crew, all of whom were related by marriage to the captain.
2. So that they would be unable to hear the song of the Sirens, the ears of the crew were stopped up with wax.
3. The crew were tenderly treated by their captain, who never (or hardly ever) used bad language or abuse and always followed up his commands with an if-you-please.
4. One hundred twenty members of the crew of a Roman battleship were rowers, who were chained to their places before a battle.
5. The crew consisted of one man, who was cook, captain, mate, bos'un, midshipmite, and crew of the captain's gig.
6. After lying dead for a week, two hundred members of the crew rose up and joined the lone survivor in sailing the ship.
7. The cook was Dutch and behaved as such, for the food that he gave the crew was a number of tons of hot-cross buns chopped up with sugar and glue.
8. All of the crew could understand the map by which their course was steered, for all "merely conventional signs" such as islands and meridians had been omitted and it was an absolute blank.
9. The crew of a gigantic old sailing vessel, which raced through a never-ending violent storm in the south polar regions, was made up of men who appeared to be centuries old.
10. Disdaining the advice of the cabin boy (who favored arbitration) the 13-man crew of a British battleship overcame a fleet of a dozen French ships.

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of the medal is presented here, and those who are familiar only with the British version and with a Hollywood picture called "Clive of India" have an eye-opener coming to them. Indians still call it the "War of Independence," but the curious logic is that every revolution that fails is regarded as a mutiny, and that every mutiny that succeeds is regarded as a revolution.

The first forty-odd pages of this book form a second instalment on his autobiography written some years ago. Herein one finds an intimate portrait of Nehru's heroic wife, Kamala, and a moving record of their life together which ended in her tragic death in Switzerland. But out of all this personal tragedy emerges a hope that many more chapters are to come of this interesting life-history.

Glimpses of a Revolutionary

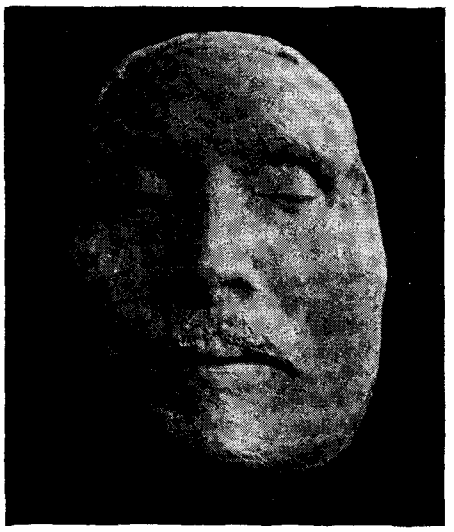
SUN YAT SEN: A PORTRAIT. By Stephen Chen and Robert Payne. New York: John Day Co., Inc. 1946. 242 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOSEPH G. HITREC

ON February 15, 1912, the National Chinese Assembly at Nanking followed Sun Yat Sen's suggestion and elected Yuan Shih-Kai provisional president of the new republic. The Manchu dynasty, in whose service Yuan Shih-Kai had enjoyed the reputation of a strong man, was finally off the throne. The ancient gods must have smiled on Yuan Shih-Kai on that day, for after many years of the game of power which brought him only occasional gratification, genuine and practically unlimited power was now dropped in his lap without his having to work for it. Indeed, he had opposed republican ideas and often fought them. He may well have wondered why Sun Yat Sen, who had done more than any other single revolutionary to overthrow the Manchus and give the Chinese people a square deal, should thus sign away, at one misguided stroke, the hard and often dangerous labor of 25 years. But he took the nomination and proceeded to shape the republic to his own requirements. This unbelievable idealism (naïveté would probably be more apt) and its price in delusion are typical of the post-Manchu history of China—the real subject of Stephen Chen's and Robert Payne's book. They perhaps also explain why that history is so racked by turbulence and deceit that even a most patient reader must soon recoil in an utter daze.

What sets out to be a portrait of the father of the Chinese republic winds up as an amorphous narrative of the background against which he lived and worked. The preface warns us that most of the material for a complete life of Sun Yat Sen was destroyed by a Japanese bomb, and that the present work has been compounded from scanty and hitherto unpublished documents. The warning is amply justified by the overall impression of the book. Many readers are likely to find that the "portrait" is after all only a telescopic view. I know that my own choice of title would have been: "Photomontage, with apologies to a ghost." This is not meant as an aspersion on a most interesting life and figure, but as a forthright essay in accuracy.

That one of the most important careers of modern China should receive such a pale tribute is unfortunate, though perhaps inevitable in view of the preface. Here and there we catch glimpses of Sun Yat Sen as he must have been, but they are the merest glimpses. Pages of intrigue and double-crossing intervene constantly; inefficiency and confusion prevail; guns go off and heads roll and the uprisings—who could possibly remember them all!—fizzle out in so many mountain retreats. When we next espy the frail figure of the father of the republic, it is on the railing of some departing steamer, destined either for San Francisco or Kobe or England. We don't know how he feels or what he thinks, though he must have been doing a good deal of both all the time. He commutes in this fashion between China and the rest of the world and flits from continent to continent, and the louder grows the ovation of his compatriots, the less is it comprehensible. Somehow we do not get a sense of reality, and we don't get it because of the dense chiaroscuro of warlords, emperors, presidents, generals, and secret societies. We are even uncertain whether Sun Yat Sen achieves his revolution consciously or whether it is forced on him, as cod-liver oil is forced on children, by some obscure outside agency. At least one rebellion occurs at a moment when it is most inconvenient to his other plans—of which we also have only a vague knowledge.



Death mask of Sun Yat Sen.

The only portrait painted with anything like a stout grip of the brush is of the Chinese national scene at the turn of the century and later. Here is something like sweep, almost a tidal bore, although the effect on the reader is very nearly crushing. It is possible that it would take a historian of Carlyle's or even Vincent Smith's calibre to patch together an organic and intelligible history of modern China, and in default of that perhaps the task must await a superior type of German professor. Nevertheless, we do here get a sense of upheaval and fatalism, and a very great deal happens in a very brief space of time. Protagonists lead short but exciting lives, Tatar emperors alternate with upstart usurpers, numerous cowardly generals engage numerous inefficient generals. Somehow, organized government carries on in one shape or another, but it is broken up into so many sub-units that it is a little hard to identify with any realism.

I should like Messrs. Chen and Payne to forget about the Japanese bomb that fell on the documents of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and look upon the present work as an exploration of their subject and a test of their qualifications, and then, if they still feel disposed, to endeavor to get hold of the personality behind the photomontage. They themselves admit that the chances of a biography are likely to diminish with the lapse of time; surely something ought to be done about it while the people who have known Sun Yat Sen are still alive. It would be regrettable if so prominent an Asiatic as he were to pass into limbo with nothing more satisfactory to his name than a legend. A speculative but definitive interpretation of his life would most certainly be better than no interpretation at all. The authors have the sincerity and ability for such an undertaking. Let them now remember that there is another side to a man besides the carefully stated quintessence of his political philosophy, and that this side is interesting because it is human and because, after all, it is a side that most appealed to the four hundred million Chinese who made up Sun Yat Sen's following.

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Little Business and Big

CONCEPT OF THE CORPORATION. By Peter Drucker. New York: John Day Co. 1946. 297 pp. $3.

Reviewed by EDUARD LINDEMAN

THE brothers Fowler, those canny watchdogs of the English language, suggest that the word "concept" "is a philosophical term and should be left to the philosophers. The substituting of it for the ordinary word *conception* . . . is due to novelty-hunting." There are other words in this volume which should also have been left to the philosophers, since Peter Drucker uses them both carelessly and at times maliciously. For example, when he states that Syndicalism is the European twin of Pragmatism, presumably American Pragmatism, he uses language which is semantically weak and philosophically erroneous. The word Pragmatism, when capitalized as it is in this context, is a symbol for a characteristically American stream of philosophy. As a body of thought it stands in direct antithesis to European absolutisms. It is a philosophy with a tradition and a record. Its tests for dealing with propositions range all the way from elementary feasibility to complex value. Thomas Jefferson utilized these tests and was hence a Pragmatist. William James was in a sense the founder of Pragmatism and the late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was an illustrious expounder of pragmatic principles. John Dewey is the living exemplar of pragmatic method. When Peter Drucker sarcastically uses the cheap epithet "Who Gets What, When and How?" as the epitome of Pragmatism he casts unwarranted aspersion upon some of America's finest thinkers.

If the reader is inclined to feel that I have plucked an accidental phrase out of true context for the purpose of administering a rebuke, may I assure him that this is not the case. In discussing the Federalist papers, he gives praise to these exercises in political philosophy by saying that they manage to be "profoundly pragmatic and deeply moral at the same time." This means, I presume, that we are to understand that pragmatism and morality are ordinarily in opposition. In another place he accuses the Nazis of "ideological fanaticism and pragmatic cynicism." There is, obviously, no accident in his curious, almost vulgar use of the term Pragmatism.

I regret these animadversions because this new volume of Drucker's is filled with intimations of real importance. He is one of the anti-Keynes economists. Their stint is to discover new rationalizations in support of so-called free enterprise. In this instance, Drucker set about his task in the mood and temper of a laboratory worker. He spent almost two years within the precincts of one of our largest corporations, General Motors, and his book is presumably a report on that unusual experience. Unhappily, the bulk of what he has written is theoretical and does not derive directly from his observations in Detroit. But when he allows his words to become expressive of his combined observations and preconceptions they carry a significant burden. He found, for example, that big business is tolerable only when paralleled by and associated with small business. The chief defect of bigness in the industrial sphere is this: big business executives can be trained and recruited only from small business. The bigger the enterprise the more isolated becomes the life of the executive. He insists that the parochial, monastic, and artificial life of big business executives is a necessary condition of their functions. This sounds paradoxical but, as so often happens, a profound truth lies embedded in the paradox, a truth which is applicable to governments as well as to industries. Centralization is, no doubt, inevitable in functional terms, but decentralization is essential from the human or personal point of view. Bigness can find nourishment and replenishment only in smallness. Without small business big business cannot survive. I believe this to be true of giant states as well.

The corporation must, if it is to survive, square itself with the basic beliefs of the American people. Here again is a principal which can be readily accepted. The beliefs and purposes of the American people, says Drucker, have their roots in the Christian tradition, which includes (a) the belief that social institutions are means to an end, an end which is beyond society itself, and (b) the belief in the uniqueness of the individual. From this latter faith flows the promise of justice and of individual growth and fulfillment, devotion to middle-class standards, and the sense of justice. The corporation, then, must find ways of assisting in the realization of these beliefs. The above is, of course, a debatable proposition but one which might lead to important conclusions. Alas, Drucker again entangles himself at this point in curious bits of logic, such as: "The American who regards social institutions and material goods as ethically valuable *because* they are means to an ethical goal is neither an idealist nor a naturalist, he is a dualist." This sentence stands as a candidate for a radio quiz program. A prize should be offered to the person who first explains which of the three words—idealist, naturalist, and dualist—is out of place.

"The bulk of what he [Peter Drucker] has written is theoretical and does not derive directly from his observations."

I wish it were possible for serious readers to extract from this volume certain straightforward and critical sections which, if placed in their proper setting, might advance economic thinking. What Drucker has to say about foremanship, industrial training, trade unionism, training for industrial responsibility, work incentives, and so on, is often incisive and illuminating. The context within which he encloses these helpful remarks is, however, so confused and at times so dubious in meaning as to render it almost impossible to sort out the useful from the trite and erroneous. The difficulty is probably to be found in the fact that Drucker attempted to provide his economic doctrine with a philosophical framework, a task for which he obviously lacks competence. At any rate, it has not in this instance lived up to the promise of his first two volumes, "The End of Economic Man" and "The Future of Industrial Man." His philosophical orientation would have sufficed, perhaps, if he had elected to furnish logical support for his five pillars of economic policy for a free enterprise society. These pillars are (a) the need for full employment and the consequent danger to free enterprise if this requirement is not met, (b) the relation between collective and individual action in the economic sphere, (c) economic rationality, (d) the prevention of monopoly, and (e) the conservation

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of human and economic resources. If he can supply sound reasoning in support of these five ingredients of economic policy, he will have an adequate answer for those who insist upon overall economic planning. His current response to the advocates of planning remains on the level of name-calling. When he asserts that "the campaign for economic planning . . . is really an argument for the absolutism of a Leader, or for the rule of the bureaucratic expert," he is merely making a denunciatory statement, a statement the truth of which would be denied by almost all American economists who conceive of planning as peculiarly a democratic conception, notwithstanding the fact that its current demonstrations have been undertaken primarily by non-democratic governments.

Can It Be Done in Peacetime?

FULL PRODUCTION WITHOUT WAR. By Harold Loeb. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1946. 284 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by PAUL M. O'LEARY

FOR over twenty years Harold Loeb has been deeply concerned with the contradiction between our scientific potentiality for material abundance and our failure even to approach a realization of that potentiality except in time of war. In 1935, with the aid of funds from the Civil Works Administration, he and his staff produced a "Chart of Plenty" and a "National Survey of Potential Product Capacity" purporting to show what the American economy could do but how far it was from doing it. The contrast was terribly striking. Loeb confesses that he brought to his early interest in economics a strong tendency to "overrate the function of engineers and other blueprint planners and to underrate the function of the complicated business procedures by which prices and wages are set and resources are allocated." But he asserts that "gradually, the importance of this latter or economic function impressed itself upon me."

His present book, largely written while the war production program was showing concretely how tremendous our productive capacities really are, demonstrates beyond question Mr. Loeb's capacity to handle the subtle abstractions of modern economic analysis with skill, resourcefulness, and imagination. But I am not so sure that he does not substitute the "blueprint planning" of the modern economic theorist for that of the engineer, and I am quite sure that in his policy proposals he underrates the difficulties resulting from the "complicated procedures" of the American political system of checks and balances which make it so difficult for the Federal Government without unusual wartime powers to be an expeditious and competent economic manager no matter how good its blueprints.

Mr. Loeb's analysis of why our economic system is persistently guilty of a distressing amount of what he calls "non-production" (with resulting waste of potentially productive resources) is detailed and complicated. Most of it is pretty heavy reading unless one is familiar with the subtleties of the theory of "monopolistic competition" as developed principally by Edward Chamberlain and Joan Robinson. There is an impressive assortment of graphs with their intertwining curves of marginal cost, demand, marginal revenue, etc., but fortunately the reader is spared most of the tedious and quite unrealistic algebraic formulae which give monopolistic competition theory an abstract analytical precision only tenuously related to the actual pricing practices of American business enterprise.

Nevertheless Mr. Loeb does, I believe, make pretty effectively his main point that in the American economy as a whole the pricing process is so controlled, so administered, as to make it futile to suppose that changes in price relations can perform their theoretical function of allocating all available economic resources into production patterns which minimize costs, maximize the realization of economic ends (satisfaction of desires), and leave no available resources unused except through short transition periods following dynamic changes in the data of the system. Instead our "economy, incapable because of the procedures of monopolistic competition of reacting to the advance in efficiency by appropriate price changes, has adjusted itself to the advance in efficiency by a series of back and forth movements usually known as the business cycle." Mr. Loeb recognizes that part of the wealth increment made available by the continuing advance in efficiency has been released by lower prices, and part of it by higher wages, shorter hours of work, improved products, and increased payments to salesmen and executives. But "the release of the residue of the wealth increment has been accomplished largely by the creation and spending of new money," and when not enough new money has been "created and spent, as in 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, and 1938, production turned downward and the potential increment of wealth was not produced and consumed."

In his constructive proposals for curing the evil of non-production Mr. Loeb seeks "capacity production" rather than "full production," the difference being that while full production gives us full employment, in fact *is* full employment, capacity production means full production which at the same time gives us "that production of wealth which could be provided were production limited only by physical and technical factors." In brief, capacity production, as Mr. Loeb thinks of it, maximizes satisfactions in addition to keeping everyone employed. He puts much stress on his belief that an overall planning board with full spending powers could secure full production, as in fact it did during the war. But he holds that such a board could not attain or maintain capacity production in peacetime. In wartime the end to be maximized was clear and simple, and the data for making calculations were available. Wages and prices were substantially frozen (though he surely would concede that they melted a bit around the edges from time to time even during the war). But to continue such frozen relations during peacetime would gradually undermine the basis for economic decisions, "actions would become increasingly haphazard, and overall efficiency would drop until the advantages of full production would be outweighed by the disadvantages of inefficient production." In brief, satisfactions would tend toward a minimum instead of toward a maximum.

The constructive proposals themselves involve principally the skilful and well timed manipulation of taxes on business enterprises and personal income taxes, judicious spending on public works programs, and a positive program for raising the minimum wage by simply hiring the lowest paid workers with their high propensities

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to consume through a public agency at wages above the previous wages prevailing in the low-wage brackets. All these proposed lines of positive action raise controversial issues that can be debated almost endlessly, on grounds both of theoretical validity and of administrative feasibility. Even the rather extensive compilations of factual data which Mr. Loeb includes in his book and uses effectively in his argument furnish the grounds for continuing controversy. I believe myself that Mr. Loeb vastly oversimplifies the smoothness with which manipulation of taxes on business profits can control the profits-expectancy variable in its important relation to capital formation. He makes it one of those beautiful spigot-turning operations which economists design so easily but which bureaucrats somehow find so hard to operate. It is simply a hard, stark fact that the American political system, whatever its merits, and they are not negligible, is nevertheless not one under which the state seems able to perform very effectively the role of an overall economic manager. Checks and balances with the resulting lack of real party programs, party discipline, and party responsibility give us a government which seems incapable of organizing and carrying through any sort of positive economic program carefully designed and competently executed. In wartime and under strong executive leadership we do pretty well, but in peacetime and under ordinary executive leadership we do badly. Look around you.

Mr. Loeb places considerable emphasis upon the tendency towards excess capital formation in the American economy. He attributes to it much of our recurring economic unbalance and resulting non-production.

It is too bad that the Princeton University Press could not have had someone do a better job of proofreading than the author apparently had time to do. There are more small but annoying errors than one expects to find in an important and substantial work published with serious and commendable purpose by a university press.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "Captain Reece," by W. S. Gilbert. 2. "The Odyssey," by Homer. 3. "H.M.S. Pinafore," by W. S. Gilbert. 4. "Ben Hur," by Lew Wallace. 5. "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," by W. S. Gilbert. 6. "The Ancient Mariner," by Coleridge. 7. "The Walloping Window-blind," by Charles Edward Carryl. 8. "The Hunting of the Snark," by Lewis Carroll. 9. "MS Found in a Bottle," by Edgar Allan Poe. 10. "The Ballad of the Billycock," by Anthony Deane.

President in Homespun

OLD ROUGH AND READY: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ZACHARY TAYLOR. By Silas Bent McKinley and Silas Bent. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1946. 329 pp. $3.

Reviewed by RON SCHILLER

BACK in the early days of the popular radio show, "Information Please," someone asked the experts to name in order the Presidents who held office in the United States between Jackson and Lincoln.

The savants had just reeled off the world champion baseball teams for the past twenty years and identified without trouble Cressey's fifteen decisive battles, but a recital of the names of those eight obscure men who held the highest office in the United States between 1837 and 1861 was more than their erudition encompassed.

—*Engraving by W. Wellstood.*

Zachary Taylor, as Lincoln pointed out, was "a 'negative' man in an era of brilliant positive achievements."

By now you're probably trying to remember who they were yourself. Here's a hint. Zachary Taylor, the subject of the biography reviewed here, was one of them. He was our twelfth President. He held office for sixteen months, from 1849 until his death in 1850. He followed lackluster James Knox Polk. He was succeeded by the equally unremarkable Millard Fillmore. If he is remembered for anything by the average citizen, it is for his nickname, "Old Rough and Ready," and for the fact that he was one of the leaders in our war with Mexico.

This biography by Messrs. McKinley and Bent is frankly adulatory in intent. Taylor was, they insist, a competent military leader, whose ability was admired by no less a connoisseur than the Duke of Wellington. Ulysses S. Grant, George B. McClellan, Pierre Beauregard, and Robert E. Lee all fought under his command. Grant so admired his reckless courage and military methods that he even imitated Taylor's notorious carelessness in dress. Only once in his life did he fight a battle on equal terms or in a situation advantageous to himself, yet he was never beaten and he never retreated. Nevertheless, his victories were all won over poorly armed Indians and badly led and mutinous Mexicans.

"General Taylor's battles," said his eulogist, Abraham Lincoln, "were not distinguished for brilliant military maneuvers; but in all, he seems to have conquered by the exercise of a sober and steady judgment, coupled with a dogged incapacity to understand that defeat was possible. His rarest military trait was a combination of negatives—absence of excitement and absence of fear. He could not be flurried and he could not be scared."

But by no account of his military successes, by no appreciation of his unassuming nature and good common sense, can his biographers create a figure that rises above mediocrity. He was, as Lincoln pointed out, a "negative" man in an era of brilliant positive achievements. During the half century of his adult life the infant republic burst its bounds again and again to balloon out essentially to its present-day proportions. The American merchant flag invaded every ocean and sea and most of the navigable rivers of the world. The new machine industries began to revolutionize the economy of the country and dimly presage the greatest industrial nation on earth. Men were frantically engaged in carving out empires for themselves in half a dozen spheres, while Zachary Taylor was content to sit his life out in the army, leading the dull existence of frontier garrisons, with interminably slow promotion as his only reward.

It was, in fact, this very mediocrity and lack of distinction that made Taylor and the seven other "little" Presidents of that vibrant era acceptable Presidential timber. For the powerful forces at work in the nation, although uniformly dynamic, grasping, unscrupulous and magnificent, were also in violent conflict with each other. What was life to one group was death to the others. Before his nomination Taylor protested again and again that there were men far better

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equipped for the high office than he. Of course, he was right. But the giants of the day, Clay and Calhoun, Webster and Hayne, were too closely allied with one of the other of these competing groups who were attempting to arrogate the untapped wealth of the nation to themselves.

Taylor was one of the few men of the era who could have been nominated or elected because he stood for nothing. His attitude was perfectly described by Lincoln: "The people say to General Taylor: 'If you are elected shall we have a national bank?' He answers, 'Your will, gentlemen, not mine.' 'What about the tariff?' 'Say yourselves.' 'Shall our rivers and harbors be improved?' 'Just as you please. If you desire a bank, an alteration of the tariff, internal improvements, any or all, I will not hinder you. If you do not desire them, I will not attempt to force them on you.'"

These words were not uttered by Lincoln in condemnation of Taylor. Far from it. They were advanced in support of the general's candidacy. It was an era when no group wanted a government to govern, unless they could control it lock, stock, and barrel, as one group was to do after the Civil War when the opposition was crushed. The most significant event of Taylor's short administration was the "Omnibus Bill," a measure which delayed the Civil War for ten years and which he had no part whatever in enacting. It was a series of compromises on most of the conflicts of the day, worked out by the opposing groups. Taylor was neither consulted nor would his opinion have carried any weight.

That the Presidency in that era was not a highly regarded office is not entirely due to the caliber of the men who held it. It was also a most democratic age. After Taylor was nominated on the fourth ballot, the notifying committee simply apprized him of the fact by letter, collect. The thrifty general refused to receive it. It was not until days later, after the Whigs had forwarded the postage, that the candidate was officially notified.

For his inauguration, Taylor ordered two suits from a New Orleans tailor. When they arrived he found the pockets stuffed with importunate letters from office-seekers, for delivery of which the tailor had charged their writers a fee. En route up the Mississippi, the President-elect's steamboat ran afoul of a snag. Taylor and some other men got into a skiff to inspect the damage. As it was being pulled away a man caught hold of its lines and drew the skiff under the bow of the steamboat and kept it there for

some time. Both to him and the onlookers it seemed a hilarious prank to play on a President.

"One woman after another," say the authors, "insisted on kissing the new President. Thereafter he was to find his progress punctuated with osculation and learned to conduct himself right gallantly."

When he reached Washington, General Lewis Cass, the defeated Democratic nominee, came to pay his respects. But it was Taylor who had to make the first advance since Cass, who had never seen him, did not recognize him. Later, when Taylor and his party entered the old Senate chamber to be inaugurated, the President-elect "was so inconspicuous that there was much craning of necks and whispered questioning to find out which was he."

"Old Rough and Ready" was never happy during his short tenure of office. Hounded by a locust swarm of office-seekers, hurt by the unbridled language and insults directed at him —the common political parlance of the day—and faced by the yawning rift between North and South which no man could solve, he complained on his death bed, "I did not expect to encounter what has come to me in this office. God knows I have tried to do my honest duty. But I have made mistakes, my motives have been misconstrued and my feelings have been outraged." He died of causes that medical science of his day could not fathom. His symptoms seem to indicate coronary thrombosis.

Messrs. McKinley's and Bent's biography is competent, scholarly, and dull. Perhaps they stuck too closely to the career of their subject instead of letting their gaze wander to the fascinating world about him. For it is an almost impossible task for anyone to make fascinating the career of a Zachary Taylor.

Modern Error

By John M. Poole

THE tall train wounds the heart of night
  Shafting the moon's geometry
  Whose echoes on the track etch white.
  At last its tangents leap and flee
  The roadbed's radial mystery.
The grinding wheel's circumference
  Collects bilinear symmetry.
Our algebra has consequence.

The subway tilts in earnest flight
  And parallels are shaken free.
Odd angles loosened by its light
  Reject the dull consistency
  With which it whispers finity
Until triangular suspense
  Collects trisected trinity.
Our algrebra has consequence.

Involved in sky brief bomb was bright
  That burst revolving cleverly
Then vindex volplaned out of sight
  Lost in the stratospheric sea.
  Thus in swift redundancy
Geometric evidence
  Returns to its nativity.
Our algrebra has consequence.

O strong and swift, debility
Reveals itself in these events.
Think while fingers still are free
That algrebra has consequence.

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A New Translation of Rimbaud

A SEASON IN HELL. Une Saison en Enfer. By Arthur Rimbaud. Translated by Louise Varèse. Norfolk, Conn.: New Direction. 1945. 89 *pp.* $1.

Reviewed by GERARD PREVIN MEYER

SINCE its first appearance in 1872, "Une Saison en Enfer" has been the bible for the cult of Rimbaud. This cult did not spring up at once upon the publication of this strange book; on the contrary, "Une Saison en Enfer" was received with derision or—even worse—indifference, and all but a few copies of the edition were soon after destroyed. It was the first book of his that Rimbaud saw through the press, and the last. He foreswore literature, and the "alchemy of the word," and dedicated the remaining years, till his death in 1891, to the life of action.

In this he was no more successful than he was in his other endeavors. As Dr. Starkie, the definitive biographer of Rimbaud, has put it, "There was in him the curse of failure. He was a grandiose failure and remained to the end 'le grand maudit'." But, despite his life-long "Season in Hell," only in part chronicled and appraised in "Une Saison en Enfer," "in endeavoring to reach the unknown, Rimbaud did in fact give poetry an evocative power that has been equalled by no other poet." Poets, not only in France, but in England and America as well, sprang up in our own century, led by Guillaume Apollinaire, godfather of surrealism, to honor the "failure." Today Rimbaud is recognized as a figure of world literature, to be praised (or blamed) as the ancestor of much that is extreme in modern writing.

Now, if only for its fertilizing value to non-Francolinguist poets (as in the celebrated case of Hart Crane), Rimbaud's work deserves to be made available in English. This does not denationalize it to the extent that such a process would in the case of writers most characteristically French. It has been justly observed that Rimbaud was the type of Frenchman that should not have been born in France; in fact, he rejected, and was rejected by, the France of his time. He felt out of place spiritually ("Had I but antecedents at some point in the history of France! But no, nothing."); and it wasn't long before he took steps to place himself outside of France physically. The spiritual phase of this "disorientation" is charted in "A Season in Hell," in which he rails continually against the characteristic French virtues. He never stopped attacking the French version of Babbitt, "M. Prudhomme," the representative bourgeois. Out of an easily understandable reaction to childhood repressions imposed by his inflexible mother, he repudiated the milieu from which he had sprung.

Since the language of Rimbaud's soul was not French, it follows that it should, in theory at least, be possible to have it speak as well in other languages. If "A Season in Hell" is at times ambiguous in English, it is hardly less so in French. In the sense that it makes everything clear, no translation of "Une Saison en Enfer" can be entirely satisfactory, for if it did that it would be unfaithful to the original. Faithfulness to the original —in spirit, always; in the letter, as nearly as possible—is surely the cardinal principle of all good translation. Wed that to a sound knowledge of the original tongue in which the work was written, and of the language into which the original is to be transliterated, and you have as satisfying a result as can be attained.

A comparison of the new translation with four that preceded it by other hands (Dr. J. S. Watson, in 1920; George Frederic Lees, in 1932; Delmore Schwartz, in 1939, and again, with many revisions, in 1940) shows that Miss Varèse has achieved a decided superiority and a greater integrity throughout. Her version possesses greater fluidity and concision, as well as fidelity to Rimbaud's intention—as far as that can be deduced—and command of American English idiom. Nevertheless, the translator is admirably modest:

> For me translating Rimbaud started as a very private and infinite affair—something to wake up in the middle of the night about for the rest of my life. When Mr. Laughlin wrote me that he had heard of my translation of "Une Saison en Enfer" and would like to see it, I was pleased; when he wrote me that he would like to publish it, I was scared and still am—as anyone who has experienced Rimbaud will understand.

One may observe that the translator who is "scared" is likely to do a much better job of a translation than one who is cocksure. At least there is less danger of the substitution of the translator's personality for the personality of the writer translated.

There is nothing in the Varèse translation, taken piecemeal, that does not make sense, by itself and in the immediate context. (To consider whether or how it fits into the work as a whole is another matter—Rimbaud's evaded issue, not the translator's.) This was not true of the other versions of "A Season in Hell" which this reviewer has seen. Miss Varèse knows her French well enough not to commit boners, and American English well enough to make her translation smooth reading—although

—*New York Public Library Picture Collection*

The French poet Rimbaud, installed in lodgings by a friend's generosity, was observed by his neighbors violently throwing clothing over the roof. "I could not live in such a clean, virginal room," he afterward explained, "with my old clothes covered with vermin."

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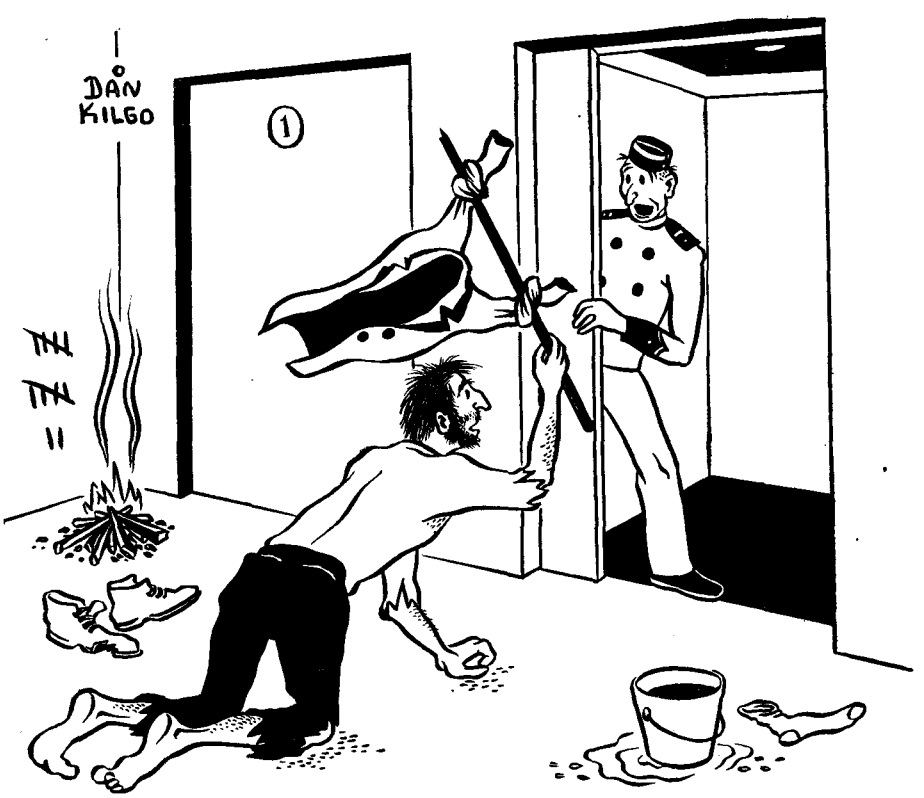
I must cavil at "those poor saps" (a sadly dated bit of slang) for "ces bonshommes."

The problem of Rimbaud's interpolated verse-poems, alas, is no more solved in the Varèse translation than it was in the others. Her versions have no form, or, when they attempt a form, ill represent the original. "Loin des oiseaux, des troupeaux des villageois," for example, is rendered into unrhymed lines of varying length, supposedly to get maximum fidelity to the *meaning;* while "Faim" acquires three additional words to make a rhyme. The verse-poems receive no consistency of treatment. In "A quatre heures du matin," in fact, she is guilty of one addition to Rimbaud's meaning—inexplicably, since the words added were not needed for the metre, which, here at least, she has not attempted to reproduce, not for rhyme, which here is completely passed by.

But these faults are minor in the total picture. If Rimbaud's "Season in Hell" did not end with the writing of "Une Saison en Enfer," but lasted his lifetime, one may at least suggest that the *translation* of "A Season in Hell" has reached a conclusive point with the Varèse version, and commend it to all and several (always excepting the section with the verse-poems)—in particular to William Carlos Williams, who lately erupted with "Every translation I have ever read of either [Rilke or Rimbaud] painfully stinks." Have you seen this one, Dr. Williams?



"Have you been waiting long, sir?"

The Twain May Meet

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST. By F. S. C. Northrop. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. xxii + 531 pp. $6.

Reviewed by ORDWAY TEAD

IN 1939 a group of Oriental and Western philosophers gathered at the University of Hawaii to explore the grounds for their differences and identities of understanding and belief. The volume "Philosophy: East and West" (Princeton University Press, 1944) was the exciting and fascinating symposium of its major papers. Among those who participated was Professor Northrop, who was presumably so deeply stirred by the issues there raised that he was prompted to further researches, of which this volume is the happy product.

The problem posed, of course, is as to the extent of ineradicable differences in fundamental outlooks upon the great basic issues of life as between the Orient and the Occident. Is it true that "never the twain shall meet"?

Professor Northrop's answer is an unequivocal "No." He goes at the problem by way of a comparative examination of the basic philosophical and cultural presuppositions and values of our own country, of England, Germany, and Russia, followed by similar appraisals of the oriental countries with special attention to contemporary India and Japan and China.

Around the roles of religion, art, and science the discussion revolves with excursions into politics and economics. The final two chapters offer the possible synthesis and reconciliation of philosophic views which the author finds possible if not inherent in present world views.

Here is one of the most provocative, penetrating, and thrilling deployments of philosophical insight that has come to light in a generation. Here is a fresh, strong, free, and cleansing breeze blowing through the often musty halls of philosophy which is tonic indeed.

There is no surrender here to "mysticism," obscurantism, passivism, in the mood of some modern Western converts to the religions of the East. There is full and explicit emphasis upon the need for "concepts by intuition," "concepts by inspection," and "concepts by postulation," by which last Professor Northrop refers to the use of scientific theories not subject in their verification to immediate observation but only to indirect test in some other "specific deductively formulated theory." The concept of "electrons" would be an illustration of such a theory. "All full knowledge involves a correlation of synthesis of empirical and systematic theoretical factors."

Whether it be in art or in religion and philosophy, the East and West "can meet not because they are saying the same thing but because they are expressing different yet complementary things, both of which are required for an adequate and true conception of man's self and his universe. Each can move into the new comprehensive world of the future, proud of its past and preserving its self-respect. Each, also, needs the other." Specifically as to religion Professor Northrop's conclusion naturally follows that "no claim to a completely perfect religion can be made in either portion of the world until the unique insights of the religion of the East and those of the West are combined."

This review has only scratched the surface of this rich mine of ideas. It will be a pity if readers are put off by the author's vocabulary, for here is intellectual statesmanship of a high order of incisivenes. Here is a placing in wise juxtaposition of wide-ranging ideas. Here is one of the most rewarding books which can be recommended to thoughtful citizens anxious to learn how and where profoundly differing beliefs can come into friendly relation.

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Why Latin America Is Different

THE EPIC OF LATIN AMERICA. By John A. Crow. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1946. 755 pp. $5.

Reviewed by DUNCAN AIKMAN

IT would be hard to think of any book which even in 755 pages offers so much soundly organized and vividly interpreted information about the civilization of the peoples who share the American continents with us. A few textbooks of equal size may bulge with larger factual accumulations, and one will look in vain here for dated lists of Argentine or Honduran presidents and meticulous records of resolutions adopted at Pan-American conferences.

Dr. Crow is after bigger game. He has set out to explain what makes life, politics, economics, the social institutions and customs, and the psychological outlooks of the 135,000,000 people below the Rio Grande what they are today—and, incidentally, why they differ so from their "opposite numbers" in the British-tinctured civilization of the United States. With an immense but lively erudition in these and several other fields, he has carried out his assignment magnificently.

The aim itself gives his book certain peculiarities. A full two-thirds of it are devoted to the colonial period; and hardly more than a fourth to the era of the independence of the republics following their early nineteenth-century wars of liberation. Superficially, it is as if a modern scholar attempted to explain the historical development of the United States by devoting the bulk of his research and writing to what went on in the thirteen colonies before the Stamp Act controversy of 1765.

In the case of Latin America, however, Dr. Crow's feeling for proportions justifies itself. Using the British inheritance as a contribution rather than as a controlling basis, the United States developed its political system, its economy, and the more distinctive phases of its culture and its social values out of its experience *after* independence. In Latin America, down even until today, the molds of development were fixed largely by Spanish and Portuguese institutions, ways of life and colonial policy, *before* independence.

The outstanding merit of "The Epic of Latin America" is that it shows so clearly how this happened. Both in the Spanish colonies and in Portuguese Brazil, the home governments and the colonial authorities ruled the overseas subjects with iron-clad, pervasive despotism which left the colonists both without a voice in their own affairs, and without scope to develop institutions or capacity for political management through experience. Hence in spite of numerous impressive constitutions written by amiable political theorists for the "free" republics since the 1820's, dictators, frequently with genuine if fickle popular support, have managed to rule most of the Latin states by orthodox colonial methods. Even in Argentina, where a kind of roughneck social democracy early developed among the gauchos of the pampas, the masses were easily enlisted in the support of the bloody tyranny of the nineteenth-century dictator Rosas; and appear equally pleased with the somewhat more sophisticated fascist tyranny of the present Peron government.

Economically, the Latin-American colonial establishment was a slave empire over Indian and imported Negro bondsmen, devoted to the profit of the crown, the higher officialdom, and a small class of great landowners. In most if not quite all the republics, the basic design merely changed with independence to an empire of peonage in which, instead of the crown, top politicos shared the profits of mass oppression with the landed aristocracy.

The colonial system also fixed the molds of the Latin-American racial relationship—a relationship in which wholesale miscegenation served chiefly to provide more exploiters of submerged dark-skinned groups, too numerous, regardless of Spanish and creole ardors, for all of them to achieve the benefits of miscegenation and elevation into the mestizo half world.

In Latin America, moreover, there was not even a frontier for great masses of people to escape into where they could fashion new values, new institutions, new ways of life and politics for themselves out of range of despotic authority. The huge exploring and colonizing energies—or gold-seeking and missionary energies—of the first New World generations of Spaniards and Portuguese occupied most of the interior frontier's strategic centers in strength before the middle of the seventeenth century. Since then, most of Latin America's very considerable population expansions have taken place under the handicaps which continental expansion in the United States would have encountered if the Pilgrim Fathers had founded Denver and San Francisco, and the Pilgrim religion had never changed.

The Latin America that we know today stems from the slave-raiding bandeirantes of Brazil, from the Jesuit missions in Paraguay, from the violence and greed of the conquistadores, from the irresponsibility of government and governed masses, by a far straighter line of descent than North American civilization stems from Salem or the Virginia plantations. I know of no book where this descent is made clear to us with such convincing documentation, grave charm, or free flow of narrative.

It calls, to be sure, for patient, even studious, reading. Matters so distinct from each other as the development of gaucho society in Argentina and of peonage in Mexico, as the Indian slave rebellions of colonial times and the final struggle of the upper-class white and mestizo elements for independence, can not be treated side by side in easy paragraphs. But the net result of this proper respect for inherent complexities is that a pageant of men, of customs and times and races, of stirring events and of the exotic arts and the piquancies of a strange and fascinating culture passes before us.

—*Gene Willson Ross*

John Crow writes of our sister republics "with an immense but lively erudition."

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 643

JAMES THURBER:
THE WHITE DEER

It led its pursuers, King Clode and his sons, Thag, Gallow and Jorn, through the silver swamp, a bronze bog, and a golden glade, the white deer's speed still swift as light. . . . It shot like an arrow through a fiery fen and over a misty moor.

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HAIL

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW was born in Dublin in 1856 in a poverty-stricken and turbulent home, for all the whitewash in the world will not hide the fact that his father, though he was sheriff of Kilkenny, was a heavy drinker, a poor provider, and a bad husband. Shaw's mother was a talented singer and a managing woman who kept her son by her side until he was over forty. From his father he acquired his puritanism and his intolerance of alcohol and tobacco and of the various ways by which men drink and eat their way to the grave. From his mother came his admiration of women of vision and his reluctance to enter too deeply into the magnetic field of the talented and beautiful ladies whom he undoubtedly loved. The letters of G. B. S. to Ellen Terry reveal that his ardor increased in relation to the distance her profession put between them. When she was playing in Chicago, he came closest to declaring himself; when she was visiting a country house within easy reach of London, he found every reason to be elsewhere. And yet no woman for whom he expressed his love seems to have doubted his ardor or his virility. Did not Mrs. Patrick Campbell say to him, "Some day you will eat a pork chop, Shaw, and then God help all women"? This charming and human side of his nature is often lost sight of in our admiration for Bernard Shaw the teacher, in our awe of him as the bearded and fiery prophet, just as we have sometimes lost sight of the prophet in our bewilderment when he was playing the clown, crusading for Jaeger underwear, or attacking vivisection and vaccination.

He is now an "old" man, twenty years past the three score and ten measured out by the Bible. Many men and women have lived far longer than Mr. Shaw, and their slack-jawed and furrowed features have faced the readers of newspapers year after year. We shudder and pass them by. It is not Mr. Shaw's ninety years that make him remarkable, or that add to his world renown, for the scientists can show you an uninspiring Turk or a Russian who is hale and heartily digesting his dinner at one hundred and twenty, and have not the Russians recently counted 130,000 of their countrymen who have passed the century mark?

It is George Bernard Shaw, himself, who is the prodigy. Here is the one inflexible genius of our time; the one unchangingly incorruptible man who for half a century has been writing our plays or our novels, or fighting for a better world; incorruptible, alone, because others have been pushed from their paths by the partisanship engendered through the years of global wars and world revolution, or by the hundred temptations and hot emotions that can move men who have the corrupting knowledge that they must die too soon. How can you finally prove your honesty and essential virtue unless, like Shaw, you have lived long; preach pacifism and never be tested by a war of survival, acclaim communism and never face the reality of communist dictatorships; prophesy the glories of an atomic age and never vision the atomic bomb; believe in the essential goodness of man and never know of Nazi concentration camps; teach that men will be free in one's time and never conceive of a new and more terrible slavery?

All of these catastrophic denials of that faith in the future which was part of civilized man's credo fifty years ago have terrified us during the adult years of one man who never ceased from telling us that the governments and the society of our Western world were headed for disaster.

Shaw preached the lesson of man's unworthiness and his incurable blindness and levity in every way conceivable to his genius, through novels, plays, prefaces, Fabian tracts, fiery platform speeches, through caustic wit, burlesque, broad humor. In the process he has incurred hatred and ridicule, and now, in his ninetieth year, inextinguishable fame and the somewhat overawed admiration of two continents. He is still working, still unchanged, and the world has not passed him by. If his Fabian socialism has an outmoded look, is not England now socialist? If his tirades against the stupidity and inhumanity of men have seemed fruitless, are we not now trying to organize the world for peace lest we destroy civilization itself? George Bernard Shaw may live many more years, for he has a tireless mental virility and a passion for life. We must return more and more to the fundamental truths he has been announcing for over sixty years.

H. S.

THANK YOU

THE SATURDAY REVIEW *expresses its gratitude to the host of readers (representing twenty-two states and two Canadian provinces) who sent in questions for the "Information Please" Shaw quiz, a feature of the dinner in honor of GBS's ninetieth birthday sponsored by the* SRL *at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York on July 25. All of the questions submitted reflected a detailed and meticulous knowledge of Shaw's life and works. The box-score of the quiz will be given in an early issue.*

"For What Were Hopyards Meant"

Variation on a theme from "The Shropshire Lad."

By Jean Pedrick

NEED we have words?
The ale is in the glass,
Voice is for Song,
The eye for witchery's glances,
All else will pass.

Oh, I have heard
All else, all else will pass
(And Death is long)
Save silence where the dancers
Undancing, throng.

Shall we have words?
I better love the lull
Articulate with ardors
Words would annul.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some Remarkable Things

SIR: Your excellent June 8 issue, in its article by Malcolm M. Willey, says this:

"The remarkable thing about university presses is not the development that has brought them to their present state of influence and prestige, but rather the fact that the development has been so slow and beset with so little appreciation, especially on university and college campuses, of the significant place the academic presses could and should have in the university scheme."

The remarkable thing about university presses is not the development that has brought them to their present state of influence and prestige, but rather the fact that the development has been so slow and beset with so little appreciation, especially on university and college campuses, of the significant place the academic presses could and should have in the university scheme, if the writers of material for the university press were to have had the advantage of some course in written English, such courses usually inculcating in the student the practice of short and simple sentences, without too much clutter of complex qualifications, or if they were to have had even the privileges of a course in journalism, in which the effort is made to teach the student that what matters is not the erudition of which he may be the possessor, but rather the meaning which, if he is able, in short and simple sentences, he may put across on the reader or readers (of which there are often more than one).

W. M. KIPLINGER.

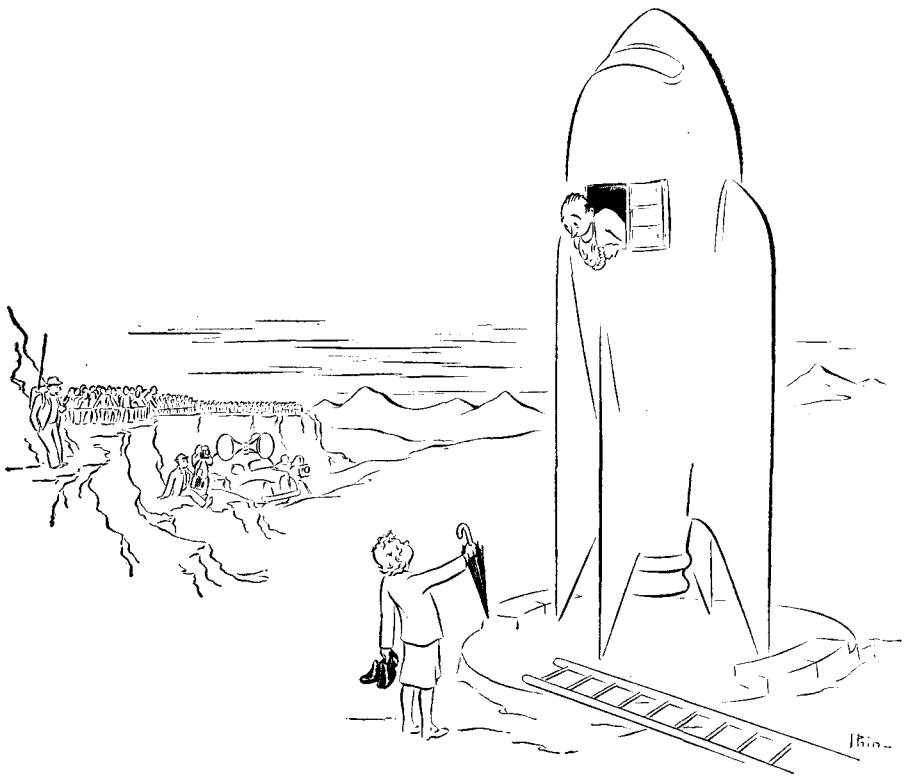
Washington, D. C.

Where Are They Now?

Sir: In the last seven years so many eminent men have vanished from public life—victims of want or of persecution, or of the war itself—that we cannot at this date hope to discover the fate which has overtaken the lesser figures of European contemporary culture. Lacking the prestige of international reputation, usually without the protection of those in power, a generation of teachers, provincial scholars, journalists, artists, and writers has to a large extent disappeared from many communities of Europe, and disappeared, alas, forever.

Yet I cannot refrain from inquiring from the readers of *The Saturday Review* whether any word has been received of the survival and health of Raoul Basique, the modest author of "La Moisson des Vierges"—that work which Eluard considers the greatest of its kind produced between the two wars. Basique is not widely known in the United States, although I believe his name is honored in the Argentine. In his native France he is looked upon as one of the leading spirits in provincial (as distinguished from Parisian) literature, the center of that Pléiade which for many years gave distinction to the intellectual and artistic life of Dijon and made the Burgundian renascence a vital movement in France.

And what has become, I wonder,



of those other bright figures—the painter Bruxdenoie, Arpas the editor of the *Cahiers de Dijon*, and J. J. Martins (not to be confused with J. P. Martins, the Paris journalist), whose literary and dramatic essays were among the most acute, the most erudite, in France? This was the group which under the mild leadership of Raoul Basique met in his flat on the Avenue Sadi Carnot every Tuesday and Friday to discuss with that combination of wit and learning (peculiarly Latin) which is now more and more restricted to the leisurely existence of the provinces the movements of the spirit and of the arts. Those who like myself were privileged to attend these gatherings know what an abundance of inspiration and clear judgment came forth. The number of initiates was small, but his influence and that of his group was growing, and it is not too much to believe that the followers of Raoul Basique are many in the United States. They ask whether this genius is still alive, and whether they may soon look forward to something from his pen.

I may perhaps add that his greatest work to date, "La Moisson des Vierges," was translated in England under the title of "The Sands of Time," but considerably cut and mutilated.

ELIOT SWEENY

New Bedford, Mass.

What the H?

Sir: Before any indignant female ticket collectors of English buses charter a plane and invade your office or ours in righteous indignation, may I say that it must have been a misogynist who was responsible for the typographical error in Mr. Hindle's "Report from London" in the issue of June 29. Mr. Hindle had written, "There is still insufficient manpower; there are still clippies on the buses..."

This is where the misogynist comes in, for when our advertisement appeared, the word "clippies" became "chippies." Our apologies to all English womankind for the error!

The term "clippies" is used for women ticket collectors in England. Maybe the English Parliament should pass a law against homonyms.

JOSEPH A. BRANDT
President

Henry Holt & Co.,
New York, N. Y.

The Lunar Rainbow

SIR: Lunar rainbows are rare in literature too. The only one I recall (outside of Starr Faithful's *SRL* poem) is in Schiller's "William Tell." I have seen them twice in nature—on Oahu, T. H.—and wish I had the power to turn them into literature.

W. G. DILDINE.

Cleveland, Ohio.

G. B. S.—1856—?

Sir: What obsequies for dear old Shaw
Who lived outside the canon law?
Let's give him, to be truly Shavian,
All rites—including Scandinavian.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Roslyn Heights, N. Y.

Reviewords

SIR: And when, kind sirs, shall we be reft
Of that not always deft word "deft"?

JOHN M. FLYNN.

Chicago, Ill.

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G.E

Aspects of Be

Shaw's friend
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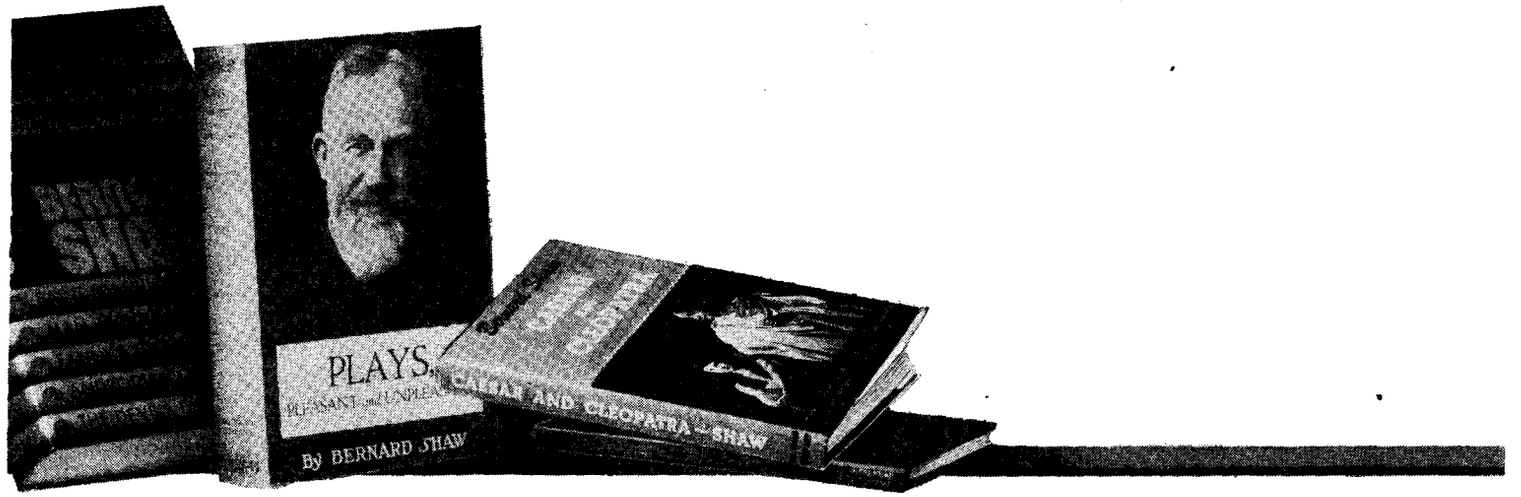
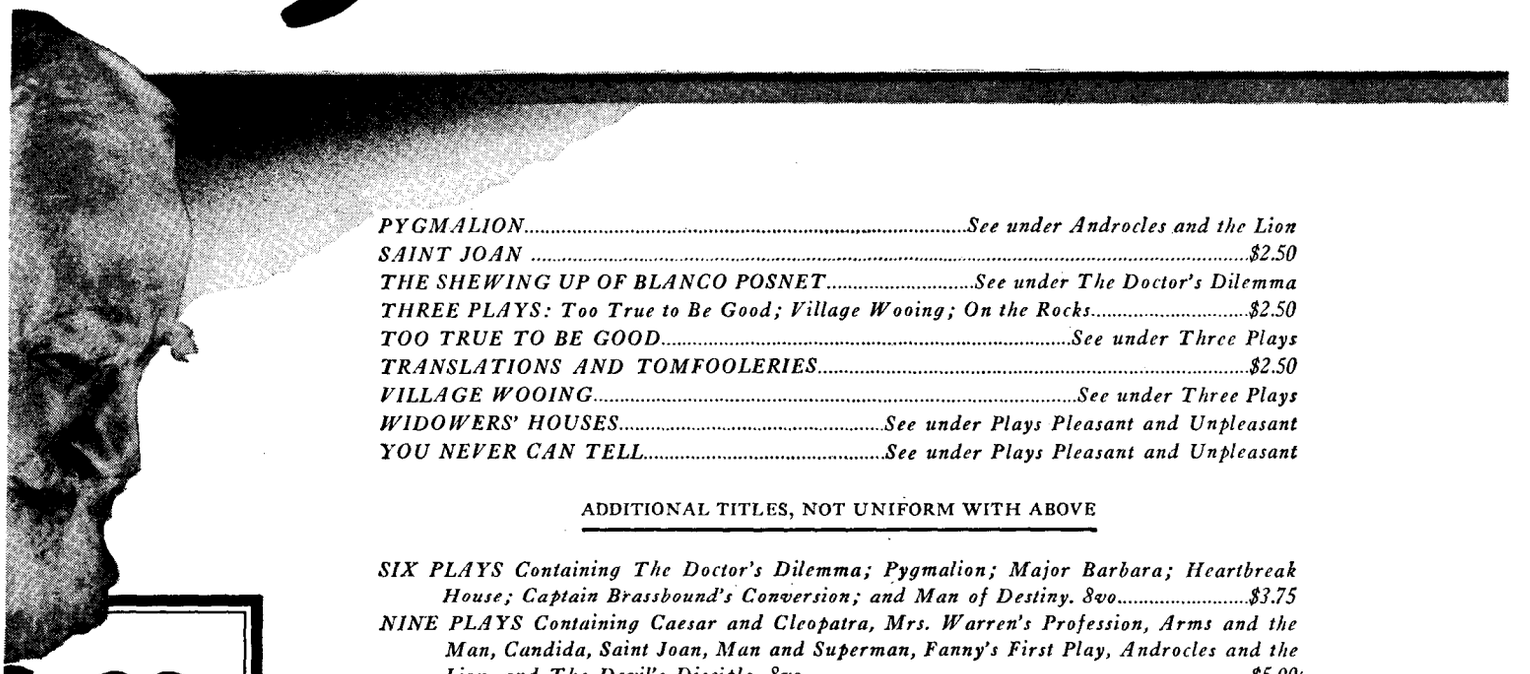


ARD SHAW xxx



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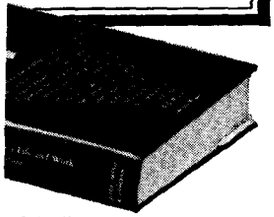

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TRADE Winds

THE PRIVATE PAPERS OF JOHN BEECROFT

THE three flourishing book clubs sponsored by Doubleday and Company—the Literary Guild, the Dollar Book Club, and the Book League of America—boast today an enrollment of two and a half million members, some seventy-five per cent of whom happily accept and pay for the books selected for them in any particular month. It would be fair to assume that a large board of distinguished connoisseurs ponder gravely over available literary gems before the three monthly choices are made, but the truth of the matter is that one solitary gent picks them all. His name is John Beecroft, and the power he wields obviously makes him one of the most important figures in the entire book world today.

The fact that he is not better known to the general public, that he has not yet been profiled in *The New Yorker* or glamorized in *Life* is due solely to his own reticence and positive passion for anonymity. He prefers to labor undisturbed in his offce or his Long Island sanctuary, inscrutable, efficient, and calm—as long as he gets his own way. When he is crossed, the mild and scholarly Beecroft charges upon his foe with the fury of a hurricane, creating such a furore that all opposition literally dissolves. Several Doubleday big-shots who unfortunately mistook his placidity for weakness, and tried to cajole him into selecting their own pet projects for Guild distribution, have long since been bounced out on their ears, with Beecroft emerging from each such crisis with even more authority.

The knowledge that the Guild, Dollar Book Club, and League are owned and operated exclusively by one publisher would lead anyone to assume, under ordinary circumstances, that that publisher's own books would be favored when the selections were being made. That this is definitely not the case may be attributed directly to John Beecroft. He reacts to high pressure as Hearst does to Russia, and leans backward so far when he considers a product from the home office that one disgusted Doubleday editor calls him "The Horizontal Man."

John Beecroft was born in Superior, Wisconsin, in 1902. "My mother," he says, "was Austrian, my father English, and some of my other relatives —well, let us not talk about them." By the time he entered Columbia in 1921, he had read most of the classics, and developed a dislike for crowds. Fellow students mistook his shyness for arrogance. His eyes are steel blue, and staring into the mirror he convinced even himself that he was something of a cold fish, not to be stirred by ordinary emotions. He operates under this illusion even now. In reality, he is a bowl of mush, a pushover for a cagey moocher or a stray alley-cat. Because he was short, he had a chance to become coxswain of the varsity crew, but to the disgust of the head coach quit the squad just when the berth seemed his. He explained that it made him sick to see other people ride backwards. His class work netted him A in every subject but elementary French, which, for unaccountable reasons, he flunked three times running. The professor passed him the fourth time just to be rid of him. Last December, when he chose "The Bedside Book of Famous French Stories" for distribution by the Guild, he admitted that he was swayed by the fact that many of the stories were like old personal friends. "And what a thrill it was," he added, "to read them in English!"

When he was graduated from Columbia in 1924, Nick McKnight, now dean, found him a job with the Crowell Publishing Company, where he wrote a reading guide to Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf. It is being used to this very day. In 1926 he decided that he needed more education, quit his job, and sailed for Europe. The Sorbonne in Paris was out, of course, because everybody talked French (he still cites this fact with considerable resentment), but he did manage to get along in Italy, where he studied architecture and life until 1928. "Suddenly I discovered that everything new in Europe was coming straight from America, so I decided to go home," says Beecroft. "Besides, my money had given out." On the way home he read one of the first advertisements of the Literary Guild—something about breaking down the barrier between the author and the reader—and applied for a job there the day after he landed back in New York. The official who interviewed him was a newcomer on the Guild staff himself. His name was Milo Sutliff.

John Beecroft "reacts to high pressure as Hearst does to Russia."

Beecroft and Sutliff studied each other closely and immediately conceived the deep mutual respect and personal misunderstanding that has been the basis of their relationship ever since. The result was that John became editor of the Guild magazine and house organ, "Wings"—a job to which he still clings.

The depression of 1929-32 set the still-unproved Literary Guild back on its heels, and an economy wave numbered Beecroft among its victims. Shortly thereafter, however, Nelson Doubleday bought all the outstanding shares, and erased the operating deficit overnight by adding postage charges to the cost of the book for all subscribers. The Guild previously had paid these postage bills itself and feared that a change would cost it thousands of subscribers. As a matter of fact, when the announcement was made, not more than a hundred members even protested. This one move cut thirty thousand dollars a month from the Guild's overhead. On the present membership, it would amount to a hundred and fifty thousand a month, despite the lowering of book-postage rates. Sutliff promptly set out to rehire Beecroft and found him returned from a trip to Russia and working in a state of considerable bewilderment for the Paramount News Reel.

Back with the Guild, Beecroft pursued his course unostentatiously, unknown to outside publishers, and underestimated by his own confreres—but the course of events played into his hands, and he was all ready for his big chance. Carl Van Doren resigned as editor of the Guild, and was replaced inexplicably by Burton Rascoe. Rascoe's sudden departure in 1937 left the post vacant, and Beecroft nominated himself to pinch hit. Within a few months he was entrenched so solidly that dynamite—plus a few jealous Doubleday hatchet-men—couldn't budge him. He became edi-

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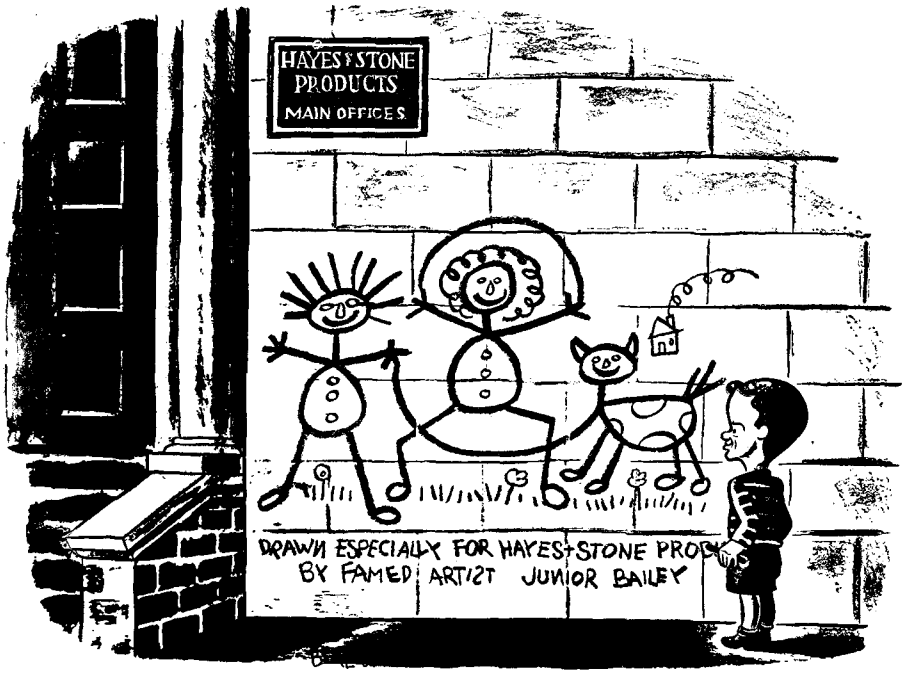


tor almost by default—without a raise, without a line of publicity. That was how he wanted it. Nelson Doubleday and Sutliff, intent upon raising Guild membership from 50,000 to a million, left him to his own devices when they realized his uncanny knack for anticipating the tastes of his readers.

In 1937, the Dollar Book Club and the Book League of America were undisguised mail-order devices to get rid of Doubleday remainders. Beecroft began to make the selections of these clubs too, without protest, until the day (in 1940) he nominated a novel sponsored by an outside publisher for the Dollar Club. The resultant uproar left pools of blood in the corridors of the Doubleday establishment. None of it was Beecroft's. From that day on, his associates have learned to compromise by giving him what he wants. As long as the membership rolls of the club keep soaring, he is the white-haired favorite, the Grand Mahatma, the ruler of the roost—and boy, does he know it!

Beecroft thinks that his biggest thrill as editor of the Guild came in December 1937, when he made his first outright guarantee for 50,000 copies of a book. It was Eve Curie's "Madame Curie," and his confidence, of course, was more than justified. Five novels by hitherto obscure writers that he picked subsequently were "Rebecca," "Tree of Liberty," "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," "Earth and High Heaven," and "Green Dolphin Street." The ultimate success of these books makes Beecroft's job look easy. Remember, however, that he makes his selections from galleys—or original manuscripts—submitted months before publication, and that dozens of publishers besiege him constantly with new discoveries on which they swear "to shoot the works."

The Guild policy of adhering almost exclusively to fiction limits his range sharply, but Beecroft has taken some very long chances in the past few years, and almost all of them have panned out. (Examples: "Drink to Yesterday" and "A Toast to Tomorrow," "The Uninvited," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," "Catherine of Aragon," "Famine.") For the Book League (whose selections go out six weeks to three months after publication) he has chosen such worthy fare as "A Bell for Adano," "The Unvanquished," "The Bulwark," "The Friendly Persuasion," and "Cannery Row." Dollar Book Club choices are distributed three to six months from publication date, so Beecroft often can wait to see how a novel will sell before he takes it for this purpose. Nevertheless, the choices he made *before* actual publication include "Wickford Point," "Above Suspicion," "Good Night, Sweet Prince," "Whistle Stop," "The Foxes of Harrow," and "Dragon Seed." Ziegfeld never picked a chorus more unerringly.

To hold down a job of such dimensions, Beecroft must do a prodigious amount of reading. He stays at home all day Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, locked in his study, disturbed only at mealtime by his remarkable wife Melenda, who deserves (and will get) a paragraph to herself. He reads at least twelve books a week thoroughly, and skims over twenty or twenty-five more. All of them are in manuscript or galleys. The only bound book he has touched in the last three months was a volume of Shakespeare. He consulted it to

"From where I sit"

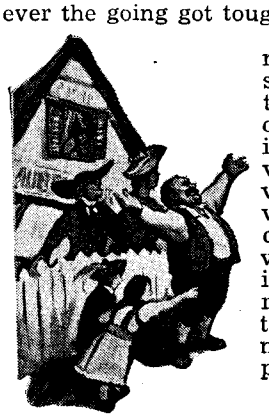
IN the little hamlet of Aurebois in Romande, Switzerland, a boy named Arthur was born in a room which had a handsomely decorated ceiling. Outside there was a narrow road, "dazzling white in a downpour of sunlight." Arthur, curiously enough, was the son of Papa and Mama, and there all the trouble and all the difference sprang. For Papa was an intricate man, or perhaps even several men. Life to him was a sort of transient thing, and thereby hangs a tale, the tale of **Homeland** by GEORGES SURDEZ.

GEORGES SURDEZ does not spell his first name with an s just because he is writing a book about Switzerland. He was born there. But like Papa, he too is transient, though he claims not to have done much except write.

And the way he writes reminds me of several things. One is the way Karl Eskelund wrose *My Chinese Wife*. Another is the way Bemelmans writes. A third is *Life With Father*.

But life with father Gardoz was anything but static. A watch-maker by trade (all Swiss are), he would inform his ample wife that he had a wonderful new offer and a new home, and away they would go on the moving van, Papa, Mama Arthur, violent little Gabriel, and the other kids. Papa loved Switzerland the way the Irish love Ireland, his patriotism grew in proportion to the distance away from it. He would stand in France, face Switzerland, and sing patriotic songs about it. How he wished he was back there. Yet there was nothing on earth to stop him from going back there, and certainly the grass in Switzerland is greener than in France.

And as young Arthur *fils* tells it, Papa was a man to be reckoned with, yet impossible to reckon with. Moving constantly from town to town, Arthur never had a chance to make friends. Instead he fisticuffed his way into each small society, while his father drank a good deal, chased other women than his wife, and vanished into the "thinnest of thin air" whenever the going got tough.



But there's much more of a story here than this sketchy outline would indicate. It's very funny, very natural, very preposterous, and well worth reading if you like to read things that are funny, natural, and preposterous.

paul

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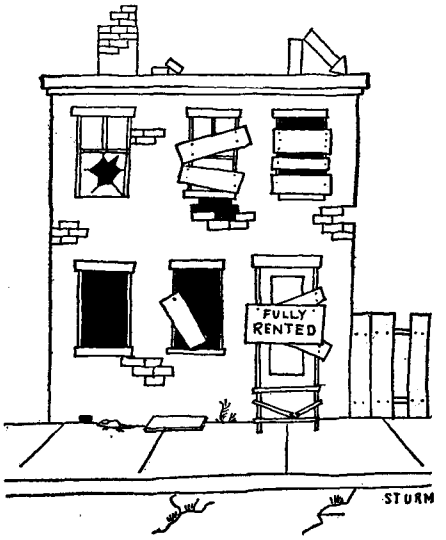

settle a bet—which he lost. Assisting him are three full-time readers and two part-time readers. John considers their opinions gravely and then chooses what he wanted in the first place.

Melenda Beecroft is a serene, self-sufficient young lady whose forefathers came over on the *Mayflower*, and who is descended on her mother's side from John Alden. She decided to marry John in 1940, and dominates him so cleverly that he actually thinks he is sometimes too autocratic toward her. To hear John imperiously order her to do something she always intended doing in the first place is a liberal education in the wiles of womanhood. Their first home was in Brooklyn Heights, in a house once occupied by John Roebling, builder of the Brooklyn Bridge. When Melenda decided to move to the country, she convinced John there was a ghost stalking the Brooklyn premises. John swore he was disturbed by nocturnal groans and clankings, and personally selected a Glen Cove estate on which Melenda had paid a deposit two weeks previous. They live there today with no children and three cats, no cook and two gardeners. Melenda likes to cook.

They have just purchased an additional estate in Conway, Massachusetts—two miles from Deerfield—where they will spend the summer months, and where John will have ample scope to indulge his passion for buying antiques. He will also have a few other items to buy, for a few days ago, when they moved in for their first week end, the Beecrofts discovered that, although their new house features a magnificent ballroom (40 x 20) and a secret staircase, it has no bathroom.

BENNETT CERF.

John Mason Brown, who has been in London for SRL, will resume Seeing Things in the issue of August 10.

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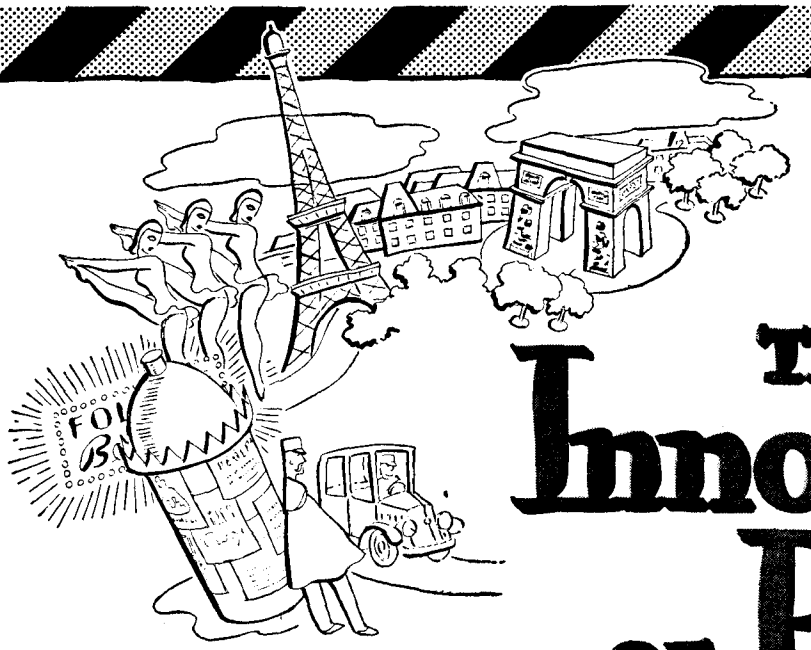

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Those Weren't the Days

GEORGE COLMAN THE YOUNGER. By Jeremy F. Bagster-Collins. New York: King's Crown Press. 1946. 327 pp. $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD WATTS, JR.

FOR several reasons it seems unlikely that Jeremy F. Bagster-Collins's life of George Colman the Younger will attract the mass attention of present-day theatregoers or theatre professionals to the career of the robust British playwright, producer, and censor of the Napoleonic era. One reason is that Colman really wasn't a very attractive fellow or a particularly memorable dramatist, even if he was regarded as the best since Sheridan. Another is that Mr. Bagster-Collins has been more thorough, studious, and academic than lively, vivid, or stimulating as a biographer. It is a great pity, too, not only because Colman's career had its amusing aspects, but chiefly because, in a curious kind of way, it is possible to derive from it a few comparatively encouraging reflections on the state of the contemporary drama.

A parallel with the present is noticeable at the outset, and, strangely enough, the comparison turns out to be creditable to the stage of today. The important period in Colman's theatre was roughly that of the rise and fall of Napoleon and the years immediately following Waterloo, and it is hardly stretching things too much to see a certain similarity to the recent Hitler epoch and its aftermath. Certainly no observer of the modern drama is optimistic enough to suggest that our dramatists exactly covered themselves with glory in their treatment of a great and historic period in the national annals. Yet, if it is your gloomy suspicion that the American stage eschewed masterpieces of contemporary import in the interest of cowardly escapism, you should note the escapist drivel offered by the British stage in the epic days of resistance to Napoleon. If for nothing else, you are likely to feel better about the modern theatre's war record when you read that London playgoers, tensely awaiting Bonaparte's threatened invasion, were offered a "Patriotic Effusion" known as "Who's Afraid? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

As usual in the theatre, there has recently been a lot of talk about the sinister activities and general scurrility of the critics. It is not my intention to defend these camp-followers of the drama, but current playwrights and producers, writhing under their blows, should be glad that they don't have to face the sort of lashes poor George Colman had to take in his stride. A critic named John Wilson, obviously the Nathan of his day, once started by calling him gently "one of the very poorest of all possible creatures" and went on to describe him as a "slow, vulgar, coarse, and shallow person" with "not one single grain of the breeding of a gentleman," ending with the delicate tribute that "there is something unhealthily fetid in his jokes; in their nastiness his jeers absolutely stink in the nostrils; his sneers have all a rankest smell; and in reading his lubrications—we know not how it may be with his body corporate in a room—we instinctively—though not given to be squeamish—rise and open the window, that the fresh air may be let in upon our sickness."

The Boys, as they probably called the critics even then, weren't satisfied just to attack George. In their chivalrous fashion, they went after his girl friend in the show. One delightful reviewer called the poor child "a poor water-gruel actress! We really cannot see what it is that entitles this insipid thing to the first benefit of the season, unless she takes precedence as the mistress of the manager, by way of encouragement to others of the Cyprian corps, who glory in their shame." There is no report of Colman taking after the fellow with a horsewhip, but he didn't exactly like critics, and his method of getting at them is still in use and is based on the fine old theory that the only good critic is the dead critic. He lamented that criticism had gone to the dogs since the great days of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

As a matter of fact, he didn't even like audiences, which wasn't surprising, since those were the times when a playwright was worried, not about the number of subsequent performances, but as to whether the spectators would allow the next act to go on. In truth, Colman found the theatre quite a hard taskmaster, and plawriting often became such a chore that he would start drinking gin and finish the last act just as he collapsed on the floor. In the end, though, he got his revenge on the theatre. He was appointed censor and became so tough and puritanical that he wouldn't let dramatists use such words as "heaven" and "angel." The stage doubtless had its joys those days but, on the whole, the current playwrights and managers should be glad they are living in a time when critics and audiences are more tractable.

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Twilight of a God

THE LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER. Volume IV. 1866-1883. By Ernest Newman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946. 729 *pp.* + *lvi.* $7.50.

Reviewed by PAUL HENRY LANG

THE fourth volume of Ernest Newman's gigantic biography carries the tempestuous life of Wagner to that most unlikely place for a German composer who hated and despised Italian opera, the Venetian palazzo, where he died in 1883. The final volume is the darkest of the four; the years follow each other relentlessly, and the chronicler keeps pace with them with his customary industry and exactitude. But there is nothing new to record—nothing, since Mr. Newman is not concerned with the one important thing in Wagner's life, his music. The same acts of malice, the same unscrupulous schemings that filled the first three volumes appear in various forms, except that the base double dealings now are done by a well-matched couple.

As the protagonists grow older their passion, which even in the midst of the great corruption of human thought retained something of its naïve and elemental power, has lost its sincerity and immediacy. The dark and unwholesome picture is not lightened as in the master's younger years by amorous ardor; now love too becomes treacherous and harmful. Wagner and Cosima von Bülow, finally legally united, form a corporation and Cosima's influence in planning Wagner's tactical moves becomes quite evident. One is hard put to choose which of them is the more unscrupulous. Since Mr. Newman elected to ignore Wagner's music, we are treated to the incredibly base spectacle of the couple mulcting the deranged King of Bavaria who, at Wagner's suggestion, wants to "regenerate the German nation through the theatre." Conductors, tenors, sopranos, theatre directors, prime ministers, doctors, and all sorts of other personages troop by on these pages; if they fit in the master's plan they are used, if not, discarded, but even those who do well by the Lord of Bayreuth are mercilessly dropped the very minute their usefulness is past. No one can come within the orbit of this magician without being seared, and Mr. Newman's narrative resembles the diary of a great courtesan, if a male one, whose jilted lovers form a legion.

Mr. Newman's infinite patience and skill assembled the outward facts of a wicked life, but besides his misdeeds this man was also possessed of genius and of that Mr. Newman has little to say; he evidently takes it for granted that Wagner is recognized as one of the supreme geniuses of music. Well, this opinion is no longer universally shared, and by avoiding the discussion of Wagner's art, Mr. Newman has weakened his work considerably. This reviewer is ready to agree with the publisher's statement on the jacket that "Wagner's life has much the fascination, in the wholly competent hands of Mr. Newman, of a master detective story." This is indeed true, but I am afraid the author will not be flattered by this very judicious appraisal of his work. And there is something else that we miss in this musicless biography of a musician: his meaning to the German nation and to the world.

It is well known that Wagner's writings on race, Judaism, art, and politics furnished one of the earliest blueprints to nazism; small wonder that the Third Reich made him the savior of the German people, the embodiment of their aims and aspirations, the incarnation of German might and genius. Mr. Newman cannot avoid noting the affinity between Wagnerism and nazism, but dismisses it—I am afraid he dismisses both of them—with a shrug of his shoulders. "Wagner certainly gave some of his German contemporaries the impression that around 1870 he was doing his best to 'cash in' on the newly aroused 'national' feeling." Then the author goes on to quote Bernouilly's phrase about Wagner's "calculated affectation of teutomania." This Mr. Newman does not let stand without correction, for correction it most certainly needs.

Ernest Newman "is not concerned with the one important thing in Wagner's life, his music."

But what magnificently complacent and indulgent an exoneration does the old arch Nazi get!

> [Bernouilly's] judgment is not only harsh but a trifle short sighted; for fundamentally Wagner's teutomania at this time was no "affectation" but the genuine expression of his feelings. At the same time it can hardly be denied that he made the most, for the immediate ends of his artistic ideal, of this temporary harmony between his own opinions and those of the majority of his fellow countrymen.

It appears that Wagner's "affectation" was not always generalized; in fact it seems to be distressingly specific and purposeful as far as the rest of the world is concerned. Here is a passage from a letter addressed to a French friend and admirer written on the occasion of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war: "What is now happening is a judgment of God on the French, the profound sense of which they will do well to study." To this genuine, though pre-Goebbels, pronouncement we might oppose the calm and prophetic voice of Verdi, whom Mr. Newman himself quotes:

> If France falls, all our liberties and our civilization fall too. Let our litterateurs and our politicians vaunt the knowledge and the science and even, God forgive them, the arts of these conquerors, but if they would only look a little below the surface they would see that in their veins still runs the old blood of the Goths, that their pride is beyond measure, they are hard, intolerant, despisers of everything that is not German, and of a boundless rapacity. Men with heads but no hearts; a strong but uncivilized race.

The only artistic ideal that Mr. Newman mentions repeatedly is Wagner's avowed desire to regenerate the German nation through the theatre. It is this idea which caught the fancy of the unfortunate King of Bavaria, who was willing to squander the riches of his kingdom on Wagner's plan. The composer's plan failed and it seemed that the legacy of this tortured life would remain its great music, but Wagner's teachings did not remain unfruitful. Another actor appeared, whose rehearsals were originally held in a beerhall, but the performance was supposed to be given on a stage that comprised the entire world.

I should like to express my astonishment that an old and experienced publisher like Mr. Knopf should condone the printing of such a senselessly offensive final chapter as Mr. Newman's intemperate personal attack on the late Carl Engel. Aside from the fact that Mr. Newman's attack is largely unfounded, the "Appendix" is in bad taste and provides the book with a ridiculous ending.

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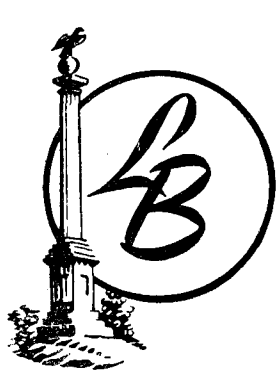
THERE COMES A TIME when the reading public is ready for a warm and human book that is bright but not spot-lit, that is pleasant but not sugar-coated; that is forthright without vulgarity, that is happy without fantasy. **THERE COMES A TIME** when, in every community, there are men and women who have discovered liberalism and who want to read about a hero and heroine from their own liberal world. **THERE COMES A TIME** when thousands of readers exist for a novel in which the pursuit of happiness is a living adventure. **THERE COMES A TIME** when readers are ready to believe that a family can live in a railroad flat on a bank clerk's salary and still be vivid and individualistic and quite glamorous people. **THERE COMES A TIME** that's ripe for a story as warm as love, as real as a pay envelope, as modern as a white-collar union and as vital as children racing down the hall. We think this is such a time. We think that Thomas Bell, who wrote ALL BRIDES ARE BEAUTIFUL, has written such a book. Little, Brown and Company is publishing it; it's on sale at all bookstores at $2.50. And it's called **THERE COMES A TIME.**



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Canada in the War

GAUNTLET TO OVERLORD. By Ross Munro. Toronto: The Macmillan Co. 1946. 477 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by BRIGADIER GENERAL DONALD ARMSTRONG

HISTORIES of the late war can evidently achieve marked popularity by emphasizing controversial issues and by sensational interpretations of people and events. The time, however, is certainly not yet ripe to decide such issues and to make such interpretations. In the absence of much data that are still secret and of many reasons that have not yet been divulged for important strategic decisions, history as well as national interest are probably best served by accumulating basic facts and postponing comments and criticism until historians can draw sounder conclusions from more complete information. Until the secrets of archives and the memoirs of leaders are available, until we know what strategic objectives determined decisions, we shall not have enough information to justify sweeping criticism of allies and individual leaders. Admittedly being tolerant and judicial makes little appeal to a public eager for the lowdown on prominent leaders. Destroying or diminishing reputations may be great fun for the writer and even more amusing for the reader who enjoys finding feet of clay in the figures on pedestals. A more scientific and objective attitude and fewer emotional interpretations that hurt reputations and international relations will enhance, at all events, the standing of history.

For these reasons Mr. Munro's book on the Canadian Army merits commendation. It is not guilty of these offenses against good taste in the writing of military annals. In spite of considerable detail in reporting military moves, it is highly readable. Even on controversial issues Mr. Munro presents both sides of the case. He advances no thesis and has few interpretations or opinions to offer. He has no concern with inter-allied squabbles or political intrigues. Grand strategy is not in his province. His sole purpose is to tell a plain unvarnished tale of Canadian soldiers in action, most of which he observed closely, and frequently under fire.

Gauntlet, the overseas expedition to Spitzbergen, was the code name of the first Canadian move against the enemy. Overlord was the landing in Normandy in which Canadians and British assaulted the shore to the east of the American beaches. The book opens with D-Day and the subsequent campaigns of the Canadian Army on the extreme left flank of General Eisenhower's forces. Certainly Mr. Munro has many competitors who have put into words eye-witness accounts of the invasion of Normandy. None has succeeded better than this Canadian writer in describing the methods of the assault, and the resistance encountered from the formidable German defenses in establishing the initial beach-head. After the climactic campaign into Germany, Mr. Munro returns to the long years of preparation that included training in England, and the operations in Spitzbergen, Dieppe, Sicily, and Italy.

In this book few names are met more frequently than Dieppe. Mr. Munro landed there with the ill-fated Canadians in August 1942. He saw the tragic results of inexperience, inadequate planning, and inefficient military intelligence. The nearly 3,400 casualties suffered out of a force of 5,000 Canadians was the price paid to learn how amphibious operations should be planned and led. The story is magnificently told in ample detail.

If the people of this country recall the Permanent Joint Defense Board announced by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada in August 1940, they should welcome the opportunity to learn about the feats of the Canadian Army that have more than passing interest south of the border. This book affords clearly and entertainingly the means to this end. Mr. Munro is an eloquent narrator of Canadian military achievement in World War II.

"Even on controversial issues Ross Munro presents both sides of the case."

The One-Man Farm

SUCCESS ON THE SMALL FARM. By Haydn S. Pearson. New York: Whittlesey House. 1946. 285 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ALICE NICHOLS

THERE is magic in the word "farm." It conjures a dream of escape and peace, a dream that many city people set out each year to capture. Times of stress always give this exodus impetus. Today there is the postwar unease—the continuing food shortages, the growing fear of inflation and its aftermath, the haunting remembrance of war's bomb damage to congested areas. Publishers are being not only smart but also helpful in bringing out books that tell what it takes to make the farm dream come true.

There has been a flood of personal chronicle and expert advice on agricultural subjects. Part-time farming has been approached in a dozen ways, but there was no book for the man whose dream is to be his own boss until "Success on the Small Farm" appeared.

This book is strictly for the man who seriously intends to sever all business connections to support his family on a one-man farm. The author makes no attempt to charm others into reading his book or even to make it easy reading for those avid to learn how to succeed at small-scale farming. Haydn Pearson has put aside the pen that writes so pleasantly of country flavors and has taken up an instrument of such bluntness that it often seems a cudgel. The fact that "Success on the Small Farm" is a tiresome book to read should not, I suppose, be held against it. It makes no pretense at being anything but a practical handbook for beginners at farming. The repetition likely is deliberate, though one wonders if a reader who cannot grasp an idea the second or third time he reads it would get it the ninth or tenth time. And surely a man whose mind requires such pounding would be lacking in that alertness which Mr. Pearson so wisely lists as one of the prerequisites to successful farming.

The book is full of sound sense and practical suggestion. There are even spots of spirited writing. The author steps boldly into the seedbed preparation argument that has been going on since the appearance of Edward Faulkner's "Plowman's Folly." Mr. Pearson speaks scornfully of the men

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—*Harry Hansen, N. Y. World-Telegram*

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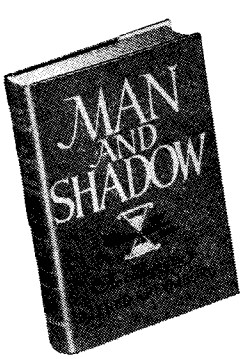
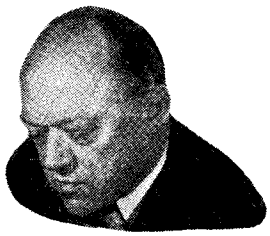
MAN and SHADOW





John Gould Fletcher

"Has the feeling of broad prairies, vast plains with roads crossing them, rivers winding about wooded hills and furrows marking the farmlands. But not purely as a spectacle; the panorama is enhanced by an impression of sunny warmth, of winds blowing on my face and of an undisturbed silence. All these matters are implicit in the fine poems in his book, which I can prescribe for the reader who looks for beauty and thought."
—*Harry Hansen, N. Y. World-Telegram*

"These are thought-provoking poems, written by an intelligent man of deep feeling . . . Should be enjoyed by Fletcher's already appreciative audience and by those who think profoundly about our native land." —*Virginia Kirkus*

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—*Christian Science Monitor*

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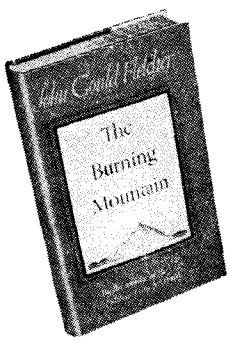
The BURNING MOUNTAIN



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who "without too much experience or too extensive experimentation are vociferously advocating the abolishment of the traditional method of plowing and a drastic curtailment of the regular types of cultivating." He is a clean seedbed man himself and he believes that most good farmers are. That does not mean he is careless in handling the soil. He insists on humus, built by green manure crops, and on winter cover to hold the soil.

By such good farming, he says, a man can make a good living on ten or twelve acres. He has no patience with the school that speaks of farming as "a way of living." It is a business, he says, and as such it should provide the farm family with the home conveniences of city living, with money for recreation and education. With that in mind, he goes into detail on how to net $500 or more an acre on strawberries, $300 on sweet corn, and so on. The city man who intends to be his own boss, to make his living on the land, will find "Success on the Small Farm" invaluable. Families already on small farms and not doing too well also should buy this book.

A Midwestern Boyhood

NO GREENER MEADOW. By Martin Yoseloff. New York: Beechhurst Press. 1946. 159 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by MARY GOULD DAVIS

A YOUNG American veteran has here recorded the memories of his childhood and boyhood in a small town in the Middlewest. From the other side of the line that divides normal living from the confused, abnormal years of the war, he looks back with nostalgia to a home where, in spite of great poverty, he possessed the one thing that is essential to a happy childhood—the family unity and loyalty that can be created by a devoted and understanding mother. This record is, above all else, a tribute to a mother from her son.

Martin's father was dead. He had two brothers and a sister, all older than he. His mother earned the money to clothe and house, feed and educate her children by sewing and cleaning for her more prosperous neighbors. They moved a number of times, but each time the new house was home a few hours after they had entered it. "It was my mother who did it. . . . She was never tired —unless she had time to be."

A boy who looked out upon the world with friendly, confident eyes, Martin tells us the things that were important to him—the small things that loom large in a child's world. The various important events that happened in the years between the two world wars are shown only when they impinge upon his consciousness. Herbert Hoover, for instance, was to Martin a figure on a moving picture screen. "His face was round . . . and he wore a silk hat . . . saying, 'The country is sound'." The depression years affected Martin because they made things harder for his mother. "In the lean and sad years, in the years when the children came to school and told stories of their fathers hunting jobs, it was very hard for us. . . . Our houses got smaller and my mother got more tired around the eyes." But the family stayed together—five people enclosed in a warm circle of loyalty and affection. The first break came when Frances, the only girl, married. Martin liked Carl, her husband, but the break in the circle made him a little sad.

There is a good deal of humor in the ups and downs of his adolescent years. He longed to be a musician, and discovered when he was fifteen that he could not play on any instrument. "I thought of it as a tragedy," he says. Then one of the older boys suggests that he lead the school orchestra. "When you don't know anything about music," he explains earnestly to Martin, "the men will want more to play for you because they won't feel inferior to you." Proud of the opportunity, but slightly puzzled, Martin tries and becomes a successful leader.

It is Mr. Yoseloff's friendliness and his unconscious, innate democracy that make this record such a happy one. He not only has no racial or social prejudices. He simply does not realize that such prejudice exists. His friends include everyone, from Norman Breser, whose father was the manager of the gas and electric company and who lived "in the big house on top of Vermont Hill," to a disreputable old Irishman, Art Langdon, who lived in a tumble-down shack with his gray cat, Bill.

Martin works from the time when the news dealer lets him sell papers to the end of the story, when he is ready for the University of Iowa. The two older boys graduate from the university and go off to make homes of their own. Martin and his mother live with Frances and her

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER CAVALCADE *Various* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce: $3.)	Twenty expert practitioners, members of Mystery Writers of America, Inc., toss selected short pieces into succulent pot-au-feu.	Fiction, most of it good, in various mystery and detective moods, two excellent factual bits, and a survey of post-war possibilities.	A-1 anthology
THE CUCKOO CLOCK *Milton K. Ozaki* (Ziff Davis: $2.)	Chicago male beautician knifed in apt. Puzzled police appeal to psychology prof. Caldwell for help.	Scatterbrained and wolfish asst. of Caldwell spins yarn of multiple murder involving lush females and a cerebral solution.	Time-killer
RED WIND *Raymond Chandler* (Tower: 49¢.)	Five early Chandler long-shorts with Cal. background and scads of slayings.	Interesting fare for Chandler fans and for readers who like their killings gory, frequent, and explosive.	Tough stuff
MURDER WITHOUT TEARS Editor—*Will Cuppy* (Sheridan House: $3.)	Versatile Mr. C., crime-critic, author, and humorist, sifts short murder yarns and comes up smiling with 28 unlugubrious examples.	Collection of works by American and English writers, including pungent nuggets from Newgate Calendar, proves that mirth and murder can mix.	Very good
THE LAST TWIST OF THE KNIFE *Margerie Bonner* (Scribner's: $2.)	L. A. toffs dash off for gay weekend at Laguna Beach, but movie-showing host takes cold steel in gizzard.	OK if you like somebody-in-this-room-did-it yarns; little detection, but good atmosphere and swift-paced suspense.	Readable

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MAN
—the maker

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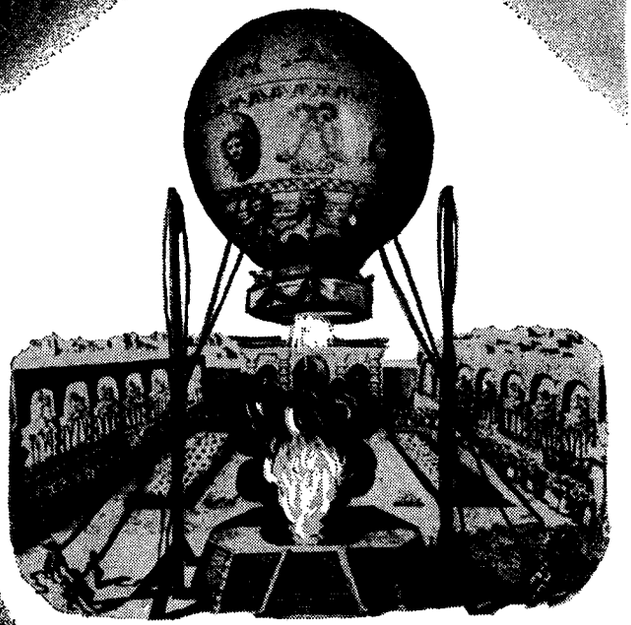

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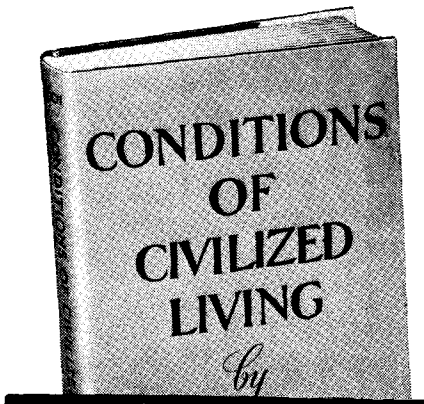

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husband. Outwardly the family circle has changed. Inwardly, it is the same. Gradually his horizon widens. His feeling for words, for the art of writing, grows. We leave him looking forward eagerly to his college years.

It is a good record—honest, optimistic, curiously vivid, deeply American.

The book is illustrated with attractive drawings, printed in copper red on a cream-colored page, by Jeanne Tallec.

"Outlaw" with Cap Pistol

SLEEPERS AWAKE. By Kenneth Patchen. New York: Padell. 1946 389 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN ROTHMAN

I'M awake now, Patchen. I'm generally awake in the daytime, attending to my business and thinking about things. As a matter of fact I have been thinking about you, worrying about you, because you are apparently an earnest and enraptured man. That is visible through all of that worthless horseplay with which you have stuffed your pages (really, it is unworthy of you), all of that slobbering around, the hard talk and the cursing through the side of your mouth, the easy satire on cheap fiction (Joyce did it once and for all, as you know, so why now?), the bitter echoing of the way you think people are always talking (surface stuff, Patchen—there aren't any people in your book at all, only irritation, fear, wounds, all yours), all that bitterness, and under it all there is your own hurt, shrinking, complaining, tender, complex soul, just as honest and good as the day is long, wanting nothing but universal loving kindness and howling madly because it isn't anywhere to be seen. "WHERE IS LOVE?" you cry in capitals. Capitals all over the book, bursting out anywhere pages high—I think you're really an evangelist, Patchen, a Billy Sunday in reverse, shouting in false face from inside a dark room, because you don't want to be seen believing the things you say, such as: "SEND IN YOUR FIRST TEAM, GOD!" and "RESPECT HUMAN BEINGS" and "THE WORLD IS DYING AROUND US, *WHERE IS LOVE?*" So you sink these things in a mess of meaningless stuff—phony wordplay, homemade non-objective art (just as good as any of it, never fear), burlesque ballads and novelettes ("A Guts with Novel"—a little of that goes a long way, Patchen), and a steady vaudeville patter all gotten up to be shocking, with *forbidden* words and *disgusting* references. That's for what? So that nobody will read what you really want to say? Then you've got a success on your hands, Patchen. They won't.

That's why I have been thinking and worrying about you. Oh, I've read the critics on the dust cover, who say how fine an "outlaw" you are, how extraordinary your "devices," how personal your "symbols," how keen your "intelligence." But notice this, Patchen. Not one of them has mentioned those things you shout out in capitals so desperately, because you must. They look the other way, they don't mention it, because they don't believe any of it. That's the part they skip as trivial, you see! The thing you've constructed this whole novel to contain—they throw that away, and clap their hands in glee over the naughty scrawling on the container. Isn't that so, Patchen? And look—the people who might believe you, who might see what you're saying—look. Patchen, they'll never get to read the book! And they can read, I assure you they can. If you just wouldn't be ashamed to step up and talk to them. Not symbols. That's for something else. If it's clasped hands you want, skip the anagrams. If it's beauty you want, don't be so damned ugly about it. We won't bite you. Come on, Patchen, write it down clean and whole and urgent and honest, the way you want it. We'll read it. We read Saroyan, don't we?

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: NO. 162

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 162 will be found in the next issue.

BP GKL ACML CP SDLCEFGHF

KFN OLLA MKCHGLH, GKL

RKCDL PFSL CP GKL LFHGK

RCTDN KFXL OLLA SKFAZLN.

ODFBML EFMSFD—GKCTZKGM

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 161

He knew the precise psychological moment to say nothing.

OSCAR WILDE
—*Picture of Dorian Gray*

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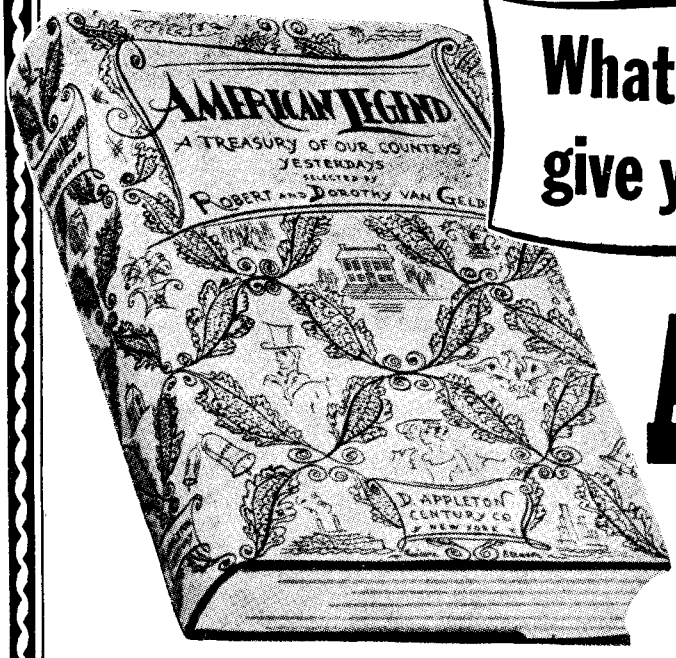

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CONTENTS

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—*Saturday Review of Literature*

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4 Whitehall Court, S.W.1.

Dear Hesketh Pearson,

Unfortunately I cannot prevent anyone from writing about me, from the briefest scurrilous paragraph to the most pretentious biography.

But no sane publisher will touch a biography or essay unless (a) he has some assurance that I am not going to be unpleasant about it, and (b) the author's name is a guarantee of readability.

So you may go ahead with my blessing. There is no one else in the field.

(sgd.) G. BERNARD SHAW

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HARPER

Authentic Early American

RED MORNING. By Ruby Frazier Frey. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1946. 380 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

RUBY FRAZIER FREY had a great-grandmother who was captured by the Indians, and a great-grandfather who made some of the best guns in the colonies, and could shoot them the straightest. He was a buckskin-clad scout, a captain with Washington's forces, and fought with him under Braddock. Now there is the core for a good historical story, and Miss Frey has gone deep into her family records, as well as the histories and journals of the time, to document it.

The results of her work are apparent. "Red Morning" is faithfully detailed in all matters that might clarify that very crucial morning period of our republic: the tangled and delicate relations among the British, the French, and the Indians; the thin and steadily thinning tie that bound the distant crown of England and the colonies; the egotistical role played by the Ohio Land Company; the struggle for the Ohio Valley; the friction between the British army and the colonials, illustrated here by details of brutality that have not up to now been generally published, at least so far as I know.

There is also the personal romance of Jane and John Frazier, an intense, in fact a torrid, affair that proceeds in spurts of volcanic upheaval fierce enough to dim out, at times, the greater struggle going on in the background. I imagine Miss Frey wanted to make her large servings of good history more palatable with this liberal peppering of romance. I could have done with less of it (one dynamic love scene is much more effective if it is not followed by another), but I can concede in this instance to the necessities of popular fiction. For the book does retain all of its strength. The flavor of the lesser folk of the drama, the scouts and hunters and farmers and parsons, is intimately real, from the leather fringes on their jackets to the homely turns of phrase upon their lips. And men such as Washington, Braddock, Ben Franklin, and Governor Dinwiddie talk and act like human beings in a situation they are creating right there in that fresh moment of time, instead of acting like characters in a historical tableau, with careful posturing. The history seems, I must confess, a little realer than the romance. But that is in itself a triumph, the reward of Miss Frey's labor among the records. Her novel is certainly going to have several simultaneous kinds of appeal, and the large audience she deserves.

"Now you take the bass."

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Swiss Family Gardoz

HOMELAND. By George Surdez. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1946 471 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE PANETTA

HERE'S an honest book—a book so honest it reminds me of "The Hucksters," one of the better dishonest books now making the rounds. I keep thinking that Frederic Wakeman might get more satisfaction knowing he had written a book like "Homeland," since "The Hucksters" is one of these books that is putting something over and will have to be explained on judgment day.

Not that "Homeland" is about radio advertising. It's a book about a Swiss family in Europe, a book whose episodes are remembered by a small boy, Arthur Gardoz, the smartest kid to appear in fiction since Saroyan came out with that brainstorm of a kid in "My Heart's in the Highlands"—even smarter than the three nine-year-olds in "Delta Wedding." It is through Arthur's eyes that the story of the Gardoz family comes to us, a story which very wisely proves nothing, and which gives us a chance to meet and like a handful of nice people. There is Papa Gardoz. He came to America, worked for a caterer, lost a wedding cake in a storm, and promptly went back to Switzerland. He had a good wife, a wife whose religion was forgiveness. Papa wasn't really bad: he loved his wife, his children, his home, but once in a while he would be touched by the moon. He would go, and his family would scratch their heads wondering where the hell this time! Most of the time it was somewhere with a woman; but at other times he just went for the sake of going. He'd come back all right, but that's when the family really had to be on guard; for then, if it happened that he found some new Swiss Shangri-la, they would have to pack and go with him.

Each time they moved, it meant that little Arthur would have to go to a new school. And each time he went to a new school, it meant he had to get his routine of beatings from the school bullies. Lumps made Arthur a philosopher. Knowing that no matter what he said to the bullies they would beat him anyway, he said everything he damn pleased. There was the time he caught a big fish and sold it to Dedu, the poacher. It was a pike and the biggest ever caught, only little Arthur didn't know that. Dedu did. And Dedu proposed to buy it for an enormous sum (enormous to Dedu) on the condition that Dedu should forget that he had caught it. Arthur made the deal. It turned out it was such a big catch the town went crazy talking about it. And about the great fisherman, Dedu. While this went on, Arthur was dying to say that it was he who had really caught the pike, but he remembered his word to Dedu and said nothing.

The character I like best is Melanie. She was married to Radiquet, a good-for-nothing who beat her up every time the whim took him. Melanie didn't object; she called it love, habit. But one day, while trying to smuggle something, Radiquet was chased by a guard who fell in the Doubs River. Radiquet saved the guard from drowning and became a hero. He reformed. No more crime. No more beatings for Melanie. One day Melanie gets a pistol and shoots Radiquet in the head. "I just had to do it," she explained simply. "He was too disgusting."

It is one thing to write a book about your childhood, but quite another thing to write about your childhood as if you were still that child. Georges Surdez has done it. What comes out is a record (for how else could a child tell the story?) of people and events that's not always easy to read; but the plodding is worth it, for in the end you'll realize here are humor, intelligence, honesty.

Objective Self

By Joseph Francis Murphy

YOU are a subject walking in my sight,
You are an object focused in my mind;
Yet only in your own objective light
Can you be truly measured and defined.

Not in my memory of feelings spent
Can what you are or what you feel be known;
Man's vision is forever inward bent
Except when viewing his true self alone.

Clues from the CRIME CLUB

IT is strange how often small, inanimate objects become vital cogs in the development of a crime. While we are puzzling over the psychological reactions of the characters in the story, searching for motives—we keep butting up against small items which, if not carrying the solution, at least divert our attention.

For instance, in D. B. OLSEN'S **CATS DON'T NEED COFFINS** we have a heavy upholsterer's needle glittering on the terrace, disappearing, reappearing buried in a victim's brain. An odd weapon and an elusive clue.

Miss Rachel and her cat *Samantha* prowl around pretty extensively in the book, and they track odd clues like wisteria seed and lipsticks. The needle is the oddest, but far more macabre is the doll, bloody and frightful, which peers through windows at night, loses an arm and some sawdust, and is far more effective in its effect on the reader than most mangled corpses in the run-of-the-mill whodunit.

As to dolls, a grisly one is the little blonde doll with pins driven into its heart—a voodoo grisgris—which *Nancy* discovers addressed to her on her holiday in New Orleans. **SHADOWS IN SUCCESSION** by ELMA K. LOBAUGH takes us into the old Latin Quarter of the famous southern city, to quaint eating spots and grim voodoo rituals. A prosaic tourist-souvenir knife is used for the murders, but the horror rests in the dolls.

SUSANNAH SHANE brings us an inanimate object which becomes the oddest of murder weapons, in **DIAMONDS IN THE DUMPLINGS.** This is, of all things, a woman's anklet. How it was used, I'll not tell—but it wasn't wrapped around a throat for some plain, friendly garrotting—so guess again. *Christopher Saxe* casually puts the pieces together in a most baffling case.

The diamond was stolen and a famous replica put in its place. So far so good. But where was the original diamond hidden while the police searched the house? Don't let the book's title fool you, there was no dumpling for it to go into.

The Gunman

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In the Slums of Paris

THE INNOCENTS OF PARIS. By Gilbert Cesbron. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1946. 212 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAY ADAMS

OCCASIONALLY one comes across a novel which is filled with good intentions, is written with a flair for style, and has an original way of telling a story and imagination. Yet, when the book is finished, it leaves the reader with a curiously cold feeling, a sense that nothing that has been said actually matters much. "The Innocents of Paris" is such a volume.

It may be because Marguerite Waldman has made what, to this reviewer, seems a remarkably bad translation in which the characters, six boys from the slums of Paris, talk like rather artificial youths attending a well-bred English public school—or like Elsie Dinsmore's companions or, even, "Little Men."

Still, the fault is probably somewhat deeper than the translation. Six badly fed, uncared for Parisian boys, in the year 1923, are led by Monsieur Cesbron through a series of contrived, supposedly allegorical adventures which, while they have a certain charm, are rather artificial. There is, for example, the time the six—Milord, Lancelot, Martin, Vevu, Cypriano, and a boy identified only as "The Kid"—try to take over a park in which the rich children play. There is a battle which might—any reader is entitled to his own private guess—have something to do with France's rather more serious and still-continuing class warfare. The battle fails, but the children, warned by a sympathetic old park attendant, escape, with the exception of the fat boy, Vevu, who also lisps. Vevu spends an eerie night with the police, and, in what is the best and most moving part of the book, meets Alexis, a youngster already schooled in the fine arts of thievery and deception.

It may be that Gilbert Cesbron has something important and, possibly, new to say. There will, unquestionably, be those who will find "The Innocents of Paris" filled with hidden meaning, with cryptic comments on the state of things as they are, and rich with necessary social significance. If one opens every new book expecting to find at least one of these qualities—or, at the very least, an exciting or interesting story—he feels only a sense of deep disappointment when he must report failure. But there it is.

While Monsieur Cesbron's novel has its diverting moments, this reviewer found it generally only quite puzzling and, it must be confessed, reasonably dull. "The Innocents" was written, the jacket informs us, during the occupation; those were, indeed, difficult times to put on paper what a writer had on his mind. Cesbron's next novel may be more rewarding.

Degrees of Death

AND THE DARKNESS FALLS. Edited by Boris Karloff. Cleveland: World Publishing Co. 1946. 631 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

MR. BORIS KARLOFF, whose performance in "Arsenic And Old Lace" we all—or virtually all—remember with great delight, has put himself in the difficult position of having to advertise that he is a fiend but also a scholar and a gentleman. Well, John Milton got away with this, on behalf of Lucifer, so it is a bit late to argue about the seeming paradox. Probably ghouls insist on freshly ground pepper and parsley—at least, one hopes so.

So many of these collections of the fantastic, macabre, weird, grim, gruesome, terrible, uncanny, supernatural, etc., have been made in the past ten or fifteen years that inventors of subtitles are rushing to our inadequate asylums like lemmings. Here is a bit of comfort and assistance—this collection is eschatological; the principals in it are all dying, dead, partly dead, extremely dead, or just about to be dead.

This mood would grow monotonous if one had to read the very good tales and verses without a recess, but there is no law compelling anyone to take 631 pp. about ill-mannered cadavers in one sitting, or lying, and Mr. Karloff furnishes some relief by throwing in a few of the frivolous masterpieces of John Collier and such items as Bierce's "My Favorite Murder"—a story not quite as amusing as the same great man's "Oil of Dog"—and bits by Saki and Oliver Onions, who treat mortality with a snicker.

For the rest, the selection is catholic and orthodox without being bookworn. The authors are generally better known than the stories. There are items here by Elizabeth Bowen, A. Conan Doyle, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Richard Hughes, John Galsworthy, and various others whose excellent minor efforts have been overshadowed by their whopping major accomplishments, but noticed by Mr. Karloff.

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Revolutions in Poetry

MAYAKOVSKY AND HIS POETRY. Compiled by Herbert Marshall. New Yorks Transatlantic Arts, Inc. 1946. 157 *pp.* $3.75.

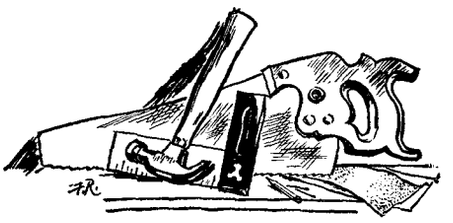
THE BOMB THAT FELL ON AMERICA. By Hermann Hagedorn. Santa Barbara: Pacific Coast Publishing Co. 1946. 57 *pp.* $1.25.

Reviewed by ALFRED KREYMBORG

AT long last, and via the Pilot Press in London, we now have the first compilation in English of the poems, dramatic sketches, and cartoons of Vladimir Mayakovsky, the outstanding poet of the Russian Revolution and one of the most exuberant fellows ever to set pen to paper. The skilful editor, Herbert Marshall, has also given us glimpses of Mayakovsky's brief autobiography, "I Myself," with its unashamed egoism: "I am a poet. That is what makes me interesting. That is what I am writing about." And there are impressions by various hands of his prophetic vision of the oncoming revolution—he joined the Bolsheviki at the age of fifteen—and of his complete immersion, without outside compulsion, in the cause of his people, to whom he devoted inexhaustible recital tours and educational campaigns in the guise of a modern troubadour. One of the most appealing chapters is an active portrait of Mayakovsky in a jammed auditorium of adherents and hecklers, just as it was with Vachel Lindsay and other American pioneers during our poetic renascence. In all my reading I have never read anything funnier than that chapter. The heads of hecklers were chopped off with ready repartee: "Mayakovsky, you consider yourself a proletarian poet-collectivist, and you're always writing I, I, I." "Well, what do you think? Nicholas the Second, was he a collectivist? He always wrote We. We, Nicholas the Second. . . ."

The wedding between the youthful Georgian's individualism and the growing interdependence of the Soviet people was spontaneous and joyous rather than solemn. And in his satiric vein, comparable to Heine's in bourgeois Germany or to Aristophanes's in a decadent Athens, not even his favorite star escaped the caustic wit of this born radical. In the first of his poems to be issued by a Soviet newspaper, he riddled the sameness of communistic conferences and asked for "just one more conference regarding the eradication of conferences." Far from being liquidated for such apparent apostasy, the poet was greeted by Lenin: "I don't know about the poetry, but as for the politics, I can vouch for it that he is absolutely right." Such satire and acceptance of satire was the mark of maturity even in the early days of the Soviet Union. And after the death of Lenin, Mayakovsky composed an ode which is comparable to Whitman's on the death of Lincoln.

Mayakovsky resembles many radical poets under the varied stars and occasions of their respective performances: Blake, Rimbaud, Lorca,



Brecht, and the early Auden. And the invention of free-esthetic forms as a natural development of ethical concerns is characteristic of the Russian poet.

I don't want to be
a wayside flower,
plucked after work
in an idle hour.

And at the heart of his blazing ego,
The tiniest particle of living men
is more valuable than all I have
done or do.

And he concludes his Jubilee on the classic Pushkin with the forthright declaration:

I abhor
every kind of deathliness.
I adore
every kind of life.

With the advent of the evolutionary atomic bomb we have also had, in our country, a new revolution, or an antagonistic reaction on the part of American prosemen and poets toward the sinister phases of that little weapon. Now comes the veteran Hermann Hagedorn with a book-length poem which seeks to prove that the bomb that fell on Hiroshima also fell on America. Like other analysts of our present and future sphere, he envisions the miracles men might perform if the unleashed powers of the atom were directed toward peaceful ends and the infinite development of creative and not destructive energies. Pursuing the road of traditional mystics, the poet consults the first creator for intimate answers, and a charming debate ensues in which American slang and the loftiest humor combine with endearing lightness. The poet asks the Lord for some miracle to save mankind from self-annihilation and the Lord blandly calls attention to a soul which most people by now consider antiquated. "Our bodies have grown fat and our souls thin."

But God is not the type of being who will "come sliding down a sunbeam and make one hundred and thirty-five self-willed egotists overnight into one hundred and thirty-five coöperative angels. . . . There is only one miracle, and it is already accomplished." But we have yet to split the soul as we have split the atom. The poem concludes:

"There is power in the human soul,"
said the Lord,
"When you break through and set
it free,
Like the power of the atom.
More powerful than the atom,
It can control the atom,
The only thing in the world that
can.
I told you that the atom is the
greatest force in the world, save
one.
That one is the human soul!"

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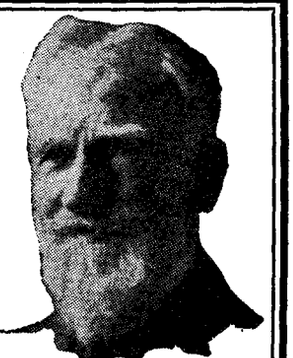

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the Phoenix Nest

SOUTHRON

I CAN go back to the room where
the quiet voice is reading,
That body of steel and whipcord
coiled in a leather chair;
And the gawky boy that listened, the
half-grown boy, half-heeding;
I can still go there.

Away from their black-belt venom,
the hoarse degenerate hooting
Where they flog a "nigger" with wire,
who would register his vote,
And befoul the halls of our Congress
with slaver of lynch and shooting
And their manners of the shoat.

For I heard the real South once, while
the North was a noble saying
In that drawling voice remembered,
that rang like a harp to truth.
Swine eyes and minds of murder, and
the yellow dogs all baying,
Were not of my youth.

Nor the balefire on Stone Mountain,
nor nightshirt and mask that fired it,
Nor a mountebank rabblerouser to de-
termine our Capitol's fate,
Nor our senators trembling and help-
less—who doubted we all desired
it—
Against his blast of hate.

The latter-day pattern of yahoos my
Southerner had regarded
As not clean enough for the kitchen,
or where they scatter the corn.
That brilliant ironic eye, that fencing
wrist that warded,
Were otherwise born . . .

For a moment forget the horrors, and
hear the voice that is reading
With that little quiver of head be-
cause the phrasing is just.
Rank-breathing breeders of hate—that
being their only breeding—
Dwindle to dust.

Great ghosts of Lincoln and Lee
moved through that room for an
hour.
Mirth stood with honor and mercy,
with virtue clean and fine.
I have known a mind of the kingdom
. . . of the glory . . . of the power.
That much is mine.

* * *

Bernard M. Allen of Cheshire, Conn., has sent the following:

I noted in your poem "Melistorte" in the issue of December 29, 1945 the line "From wound bronze horn and wild fanfare." It recalled two lines of Whittier's, "O never yet since Roland wound his horn at Roncesvalles has such a blast been blown." (I have forgotten the title of the poem.) My own early notion of winding a horn was vaguely connected with the curve of the horn and a policeman's rattle. This wind, of course, has no connection with the other verb, wind (wound) and the past and the past participle is winded. The Century Dictionary gives a full discussion of the confusion which clearly goes back to the older pronunciation of the word. Wind, by the way, is the only word of similar spelling with short *i*, *cf.* bind, find, grind, blind, hind, kind, mind, rind. We had an Irish maid, some fifty years ago, who called the wind "wined," and had several other words which were in good British use two or three hundred years ago. Windlass, from the other wind, shortened the vowel. I suppose the reason why poetry kept the long *i* was the necessity of rhyming with the other words, and if it had to be wind on the end of a line it would seem proper to say it that way in other places, in poetry, that is. Your poem has the effect of a beautiful nightmare, somewhat too realistic to pass the movie censor.

* * *

—*William Rose Benét*

Said the Dog to the Bee, "Now marg you,
I dowanna argue!
All I'm dead again' is 'is
Parthenogenesis."

* * *

Bernard Sobel of New York wishes to say:

Earle Walbridge points out in The Phoenix Nest coincidental similarities in the play "Harvey" to a short story published in *Scribner's*, November 1937, called "Mr. Mergenthwirker's Lobblies," by Nelson S. Bond. Another coincidental similarity is more recent. For in Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited" one of the characters goes half way through the book talking to a toy teddy bear.

* * *

Dr. Harry Wood, dean of the College of Fine Arts of the Bradley Polytechnic Institute of Peoria, Ill., sends me the following "streamlined poem":

VELISION OF TIME

So fast the syearsons fall
Sautumner, spwringter's ALL—

—which makes me a trifle dizzy. And Betrenia Bowker of Kansas City, Mo., submits:

LEAVE OUT, NUMBER FIVE

Mississippi will get a terrific thankin',
When she votes out both——and——.

While D. H. Rich of Maplewood, N. J., cries:

FOR THEM AS REMEMBERS THEIR TWENTIES

I'd ruther have Bowles and Price Con-
trols
Than those boom-and-bust depression
doles.

* * *

I am glad to share with you the following from Wendy Warfield:

According to the March 23 issue, on page 18, "The Irish Are Still Poets." With characteristic modesty, the author of the article makes no mention of how they are still *making poets* out of some Americans (of all species) right here in Manhattan. At Columbia and N. Y. U. Over the Christmas holiday last year it was a great pleasure to show New York to a couple of rather brilliant Canadian WAC's from the Royal Ordnance Corps at Halifax. After every nook and cranny, every possibility of night life (even the lowly Staten Island ferryboat trip to see the Statue of Liberty illuminated at night), had been explored, the two made a strange request. Each had put in a year of school-teaching before joining up. Their own grade-school days revived in mind. So they wanted to see and speak to a real live poet—which ought to be possible, since they had discovered one whose verse they taught in their classes in Edmonton and Ottawa was right here in town. Padraic Colum autographed a couple of his books for them. And that remains the crest of the wave of glory of their visit to Manhattan.

The attached was on a Christmas card to P. C. Perhaps it is not too light to print?

* * *

THE BIG TREE

A blackbird sings in Kerry,
Enchanted by a magic wand,
And conjures up an elfin band
From out the land of faery.

The little people play, quite
Oblivious to mortal eyes,
And ancient heroes, pageantwise
Appear in bright broad daylight.

This dull old world they banish—
Whatever land, whatever sea—
From off the threshhold boundary
Where past and present vanish.

And life is never solemn,
When time stands still beneath the
Tree
Of Bunlahy, to dream with me
And hear from Padraic Colum.

WENDY WARFIELD.

* * *

. . . That freighter is still stuck on Avery's ledge, and a lobsterman is sculling past in an orange dory. And now I think it is almost supper-time. . . . WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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SPIRITUALS. The Two Gospel Keys; Thrasher Wonders. DISC #658 (3 10″) $3.15	Two Gospel Keys occasionally uneven—movements of singers. Generally a good recording.	B	Few people know the spiritual, as was, before the arrangers and broadwayizers found it. To see how far it has come (or gone) try the startling Disc album: two delightful old ladies with a guitar (Gospel Keys); group of fanatical, out of tune, exciting male voices. Compare with sophisticated solo arrangements sung by trained voices of Robeson and Spencer.
SPIRITUALS. Paul Robeson; L. Brown, pf. and vocal accompaniment. Columbia M 610 (4 10″) $4	Nice effect of 2nd voice off-mike as accompaniment. Excellent recording of Robeson voice.	A—Crackly	
AMERICAN SPIRITUALS. Kenneth Spencer. Sonora MS 478 (4 10″) $2.75	Spencer's big voice should be farther from mike. Bit hard on ears here.	C+ to D Poor surface	
BRAHMS, VIOLIN CONCERTO. Szigeti, Phila. Orch. Ormandy. Columbia M 603 (5) $5.75	Again a first rate job; beautiful resonance in violin, plus perfect balance betw. solo and orch—great improvement over older violin recordings.	A—	Issued several months back, this album rates with other fine Columbias. Szigeti and Ormandy give a properly classical reading—good for a change.

MODERN MUSIC

I AM indebted to Marguerite Bartholomew of Atlanta, whose letter on Toscanini and the "innocuous desuetude" of modern music I published in the June 8 *SRL*, for a further explanation which prompts me to discuss the question of modern music. Miss Bartholomew says in part:

> It may surprise you to learn that I, personally, have followed the modern movement in music with keen if detached interest since the fall of '23. . . . I heard modern works ad infinitum conducted by Damrosch, Toscanini, Stokowski, Koussevitzky, Ormandy, Rodzinski, and others.
>
> Like "pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar, where are they now, where are they now?," a check of the programs during that period would unquestionably reveal the fact that most of them have been "doomed to innocuous desuetude."
>
> It is also common knowledge that the general public—yea, even New York concert audiences in the mass—are still unreceptive to most modern music. . . . From observation and from the comment I continue to hear, the general attitude is thumbs down.
>
> I am not a reactionary, nor do I indulge in blanket condemnation. Those composers whose work bears the stamp of genius, originality, and imagination, and is not merely calculation plus inspiration, have made significant contributions that will readily stand the test of time. . . .
>
> Despite the assertions of certain modernists, music has infinite diversity of appeal, and since human emotions are as old as the race and men were not created mechanical robots, the chances are that the average layman and musician alike, who seek escape and sanctuary and inspiration in music, will continue to give the old masters their preference. . . .

Yes, many new works, played once, are doomed. But, I ask, what more do you expect? Look at the music of *any* earlier period. How much of what was then ballyhooed is now left? Possibly one or two per cent, for most periods. I would guess that today's music is no different. More, if you look at the programs of Mozart's period you will find that Bach had then been effectively "doomed." He was virtually unknown. Some of today's doomed works may well be resurrected as classics. Moreover we ourselves are not above burying the greatest of past composers while we worship others. What about Josquin, Monteverdi, Purcell, Lassus, Schütz, Byrd? Classics all. I can't see that any of this holds water as an argument against our own contemporary music. I also wonder (a) whether music is "escape and sanctuary" or something more realistic than that; and (b) whether modern music, so-called, is any more mechanical and "robot-like" on the average than other music. Bach is mechanical and monotonous when you don't understand it. Beethoven, on first hearing, can seem horribly noisy.

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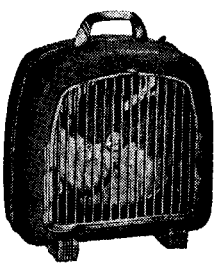

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D. Good-for-nothing.	28 34 21 141 145 61 121
E. Dorcas (Bib.)	154 77 62 106 173 60 136
F. Formerly called a serpentine kame.	147 134 151 45 119
G. American painter and illustrator (1894– ; covers of "Saturday Evening Post," etc.)	144 171 54 93 66 37 165 137
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K. Long whip used in flogging (the Orient).	69 155 109 148 17 125 82
L. Spread abroad; inflated with wind.	64 83 118 90 26 158 162 78
A mollycoddle.	108 42 8 65 117 92 112

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
N. Page in "Love's Labour's Lost."	2 143 87 146
O. To urge strongly; advise; warn.	160 43 67 9 53 128
P. Excessively grasping.	116 56 44 14 157 80 178 10 94
Q. C.O., defense of Stalingrad.	81 88 172 130 105 140 5
R. Kind of "butter" used in chocolate manufacturing.	127 75 138 163 84 175
S. Heedful.	115 95 166 48 131 49
T. Thick gruel.	25 104 12 98 50 164 168 170
U. River, into the Mississippi; also city, with "Falls" (Wis.)	150 174 133 20 29 89 71 99
V. To make suitable.	96 32 73 51 33
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X. Biblical heroine of a Saint-Saëns opera.	40 19 102 15 97 120 23
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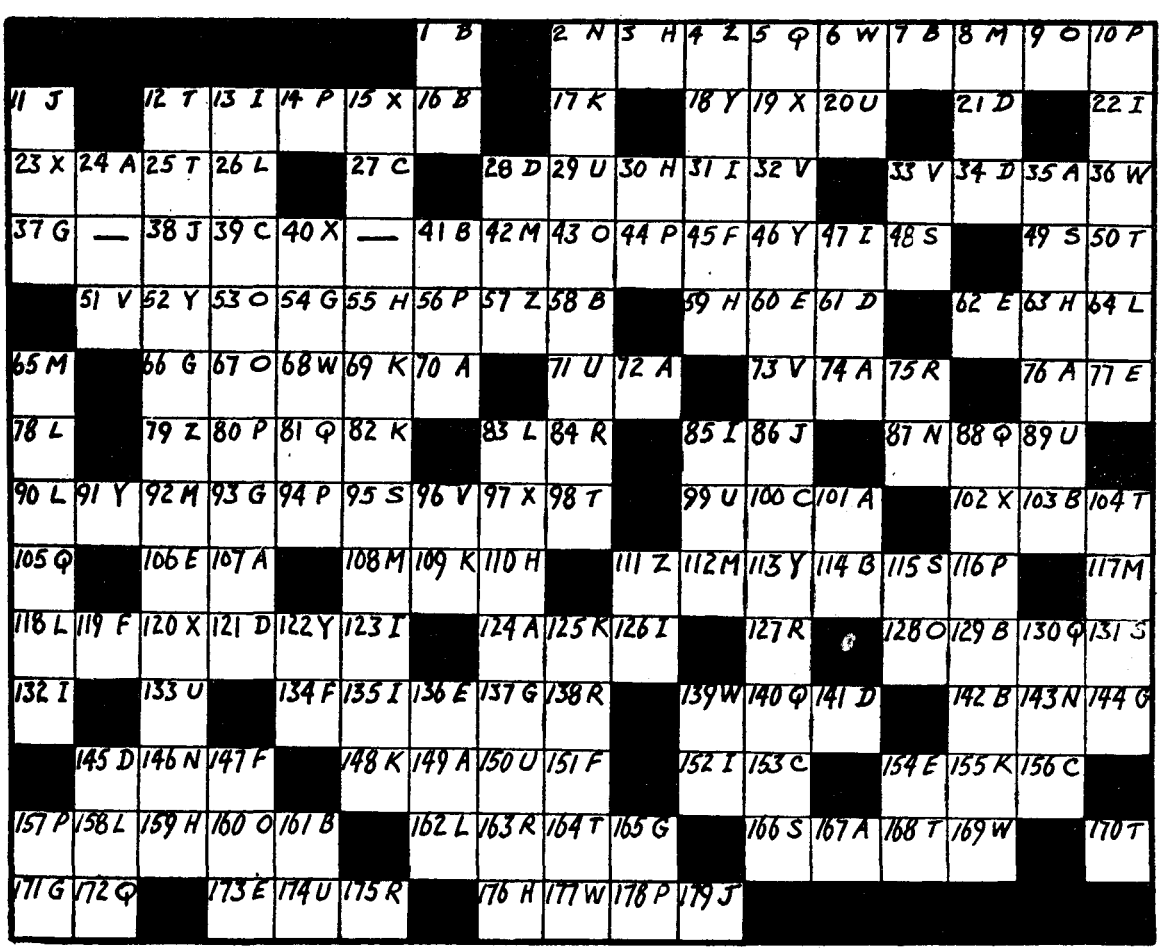
Z. To grate harshly upon.	4 111 57 79

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 23 of this issue.

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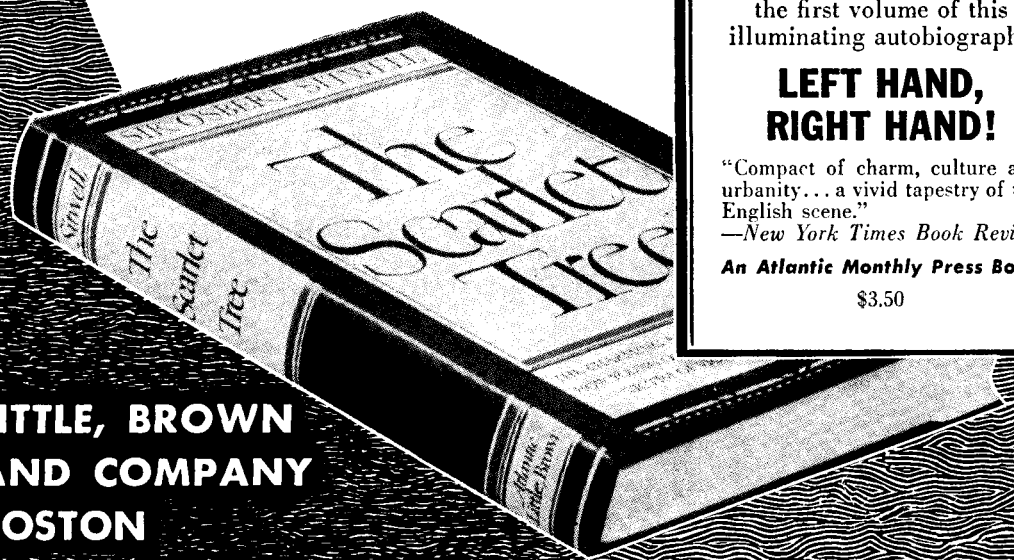

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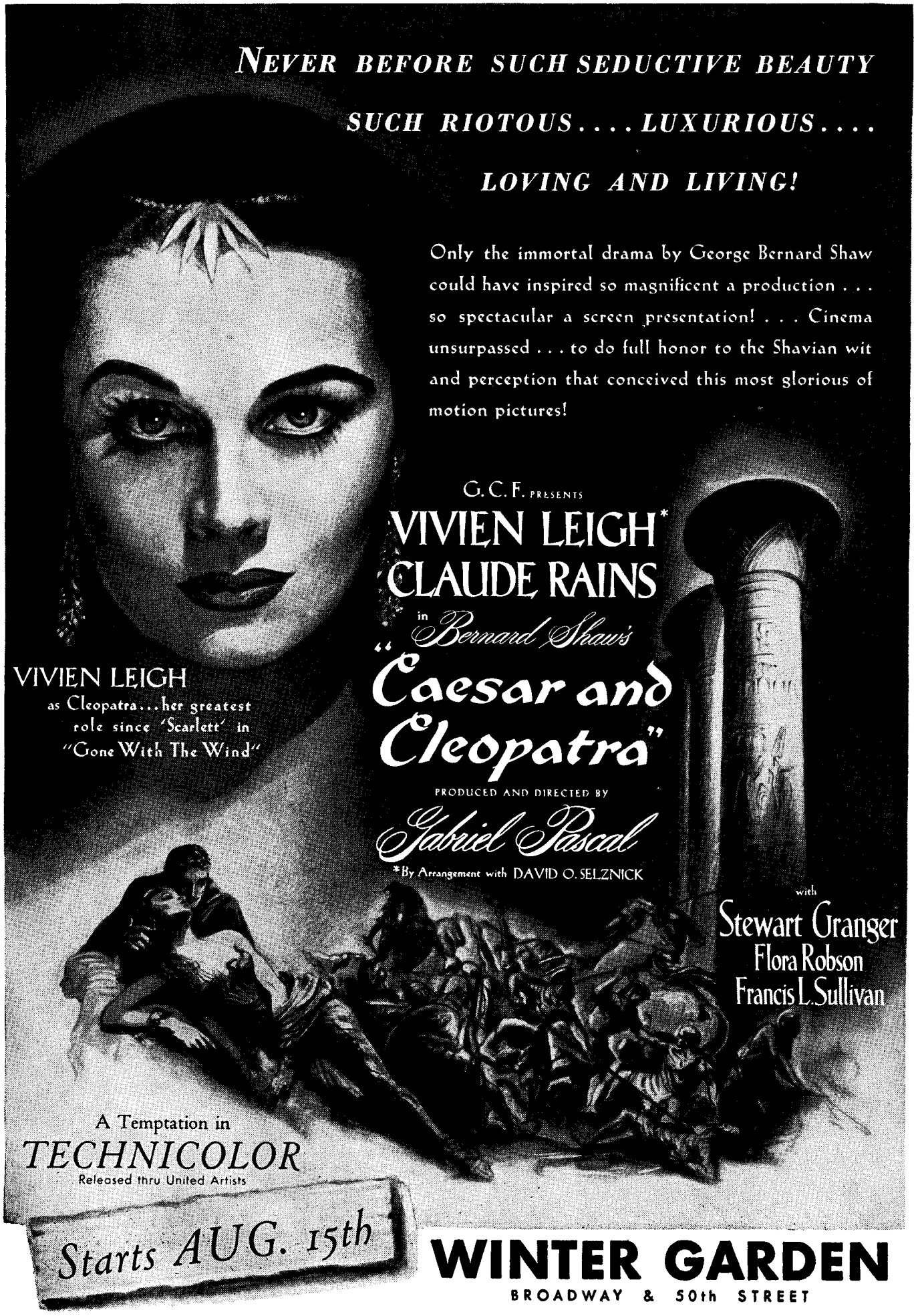
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